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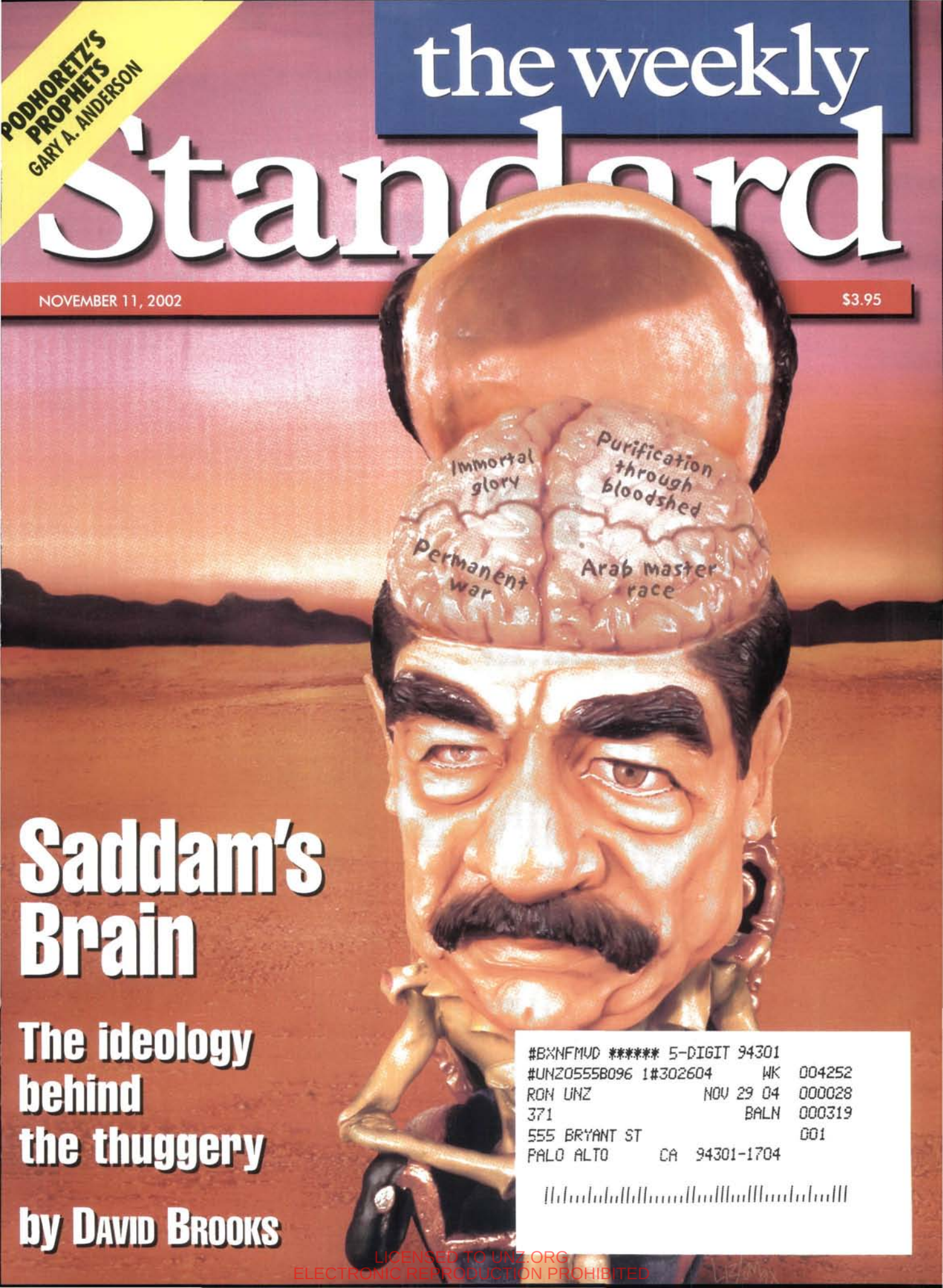

Saddam's Brain

The ideology behind the thuggery

by David Brooks

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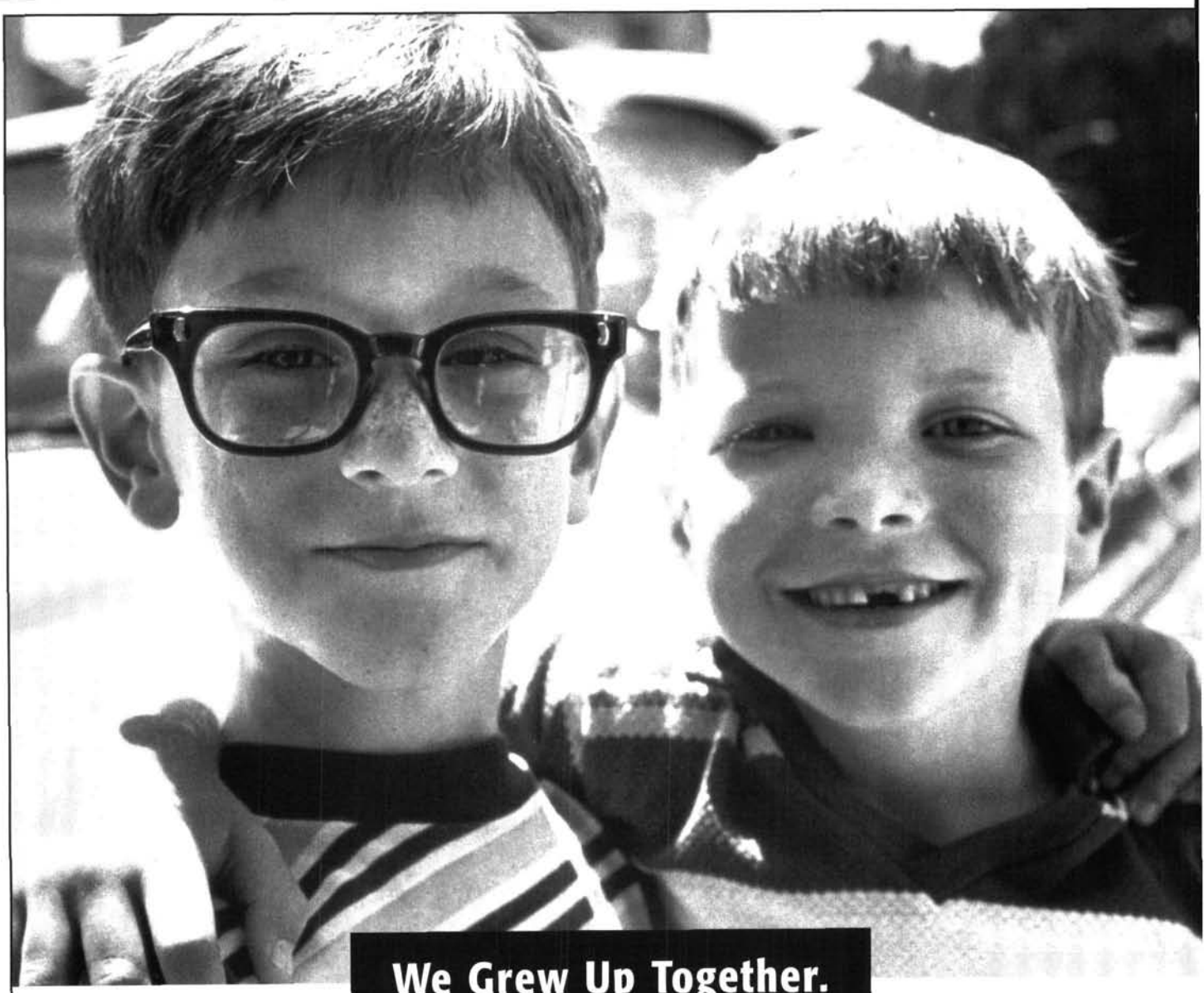

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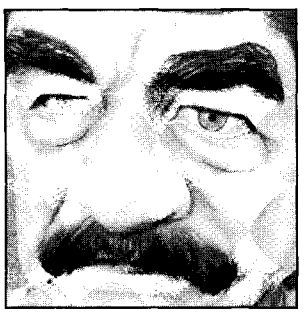

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DeWayne's World

Four years ago, DeWayne Wickham, whose column on the *USA Today* editorial page occupies some of the choicest real estate in opinion journalism, made a convincing case that the dog days of dealing diplomatically with Saddam Hussein were done. "In refusing to permit U.N. inspectors unfettered access to sites thought to be hiding places for his weapons of mass destruction," Wickham maintained, "Saddam trivializes the role of the world body." He wasn't done. "There's no proof that diplomacy works with Saddam. Diplomatic efforts didn't stop him from invading Kuwait. And months of jawboning failed to convince him to withdraw. Only the humiliating military defeat his army suffered accomplished that."

Since that column of Feb. 13, 1998, several things have taken place: Weapons inspectors were kicked out, the inspection team was neutered, and Saddam has doggedly continued his defiance of international law. And one thing hasn't happened: inspections. If ever there was a textbook example of failed diplomacy, it would be the U.N.'s capitulation on Iraq since 1998.

It was surprising, then, to see Wickham argue in his Oct. 10 column, headlined "Congress Must Collar the Dogs of War," that Congress should grant the U.N. "a reasonable timetable to ensure that Iraq has disarmed—and urge Bush to work with that international body to get this done." Huh?

Intrigued, THE SCRAPBOOK checked out other Wickham arguments on Iraq, and sure enough, faster than you can say Republican-in-the-White-House, Wickham—like Tom Daschle, Bill Clinton, Al Gore, and many other prominent Democrats—seems to be chasing his own tail.

Some highlights:

When Bush said recently, "Iraq could decide on any given day to provide a biological or chemical weapon to a terrorist group or individual terrorists," and "Alliances with terrorists could allow the Iraqi regime to attack America without leaving any fingerprints," Wickham dismissed those arguments, writing simply, "That's not good enough."

But in 1998, after mocking those who favored diplomacy with Saddam, Wickham praised the Clinton administration's bellicosity with a warning that sounds remarkably similar to the one issued by President Bush: "Left unchecked, Saddam will stockpile—and eventually use again—his biological weapons. The target may be a neighboring state, or some segment of his own citizens. Even more troubling, he may parcel out some of those deadly toxins to terrorists who will try to unleash them on American soil."

And these days, Wickham argues that "Bush has yet to produce any real proof that the Iraqi leader poses a threat to this nation or our allies." Back in 1998, however, Wickham lamented the release of the film *Wag the Dog* just as President Clinton was preparing to send troops to Iraq. Wrote Wickham: "Clinton cannot wait for the sex scandal to play out before ordering U.S. forces into action." Because "if Clinton doesn't act soon to wipe out his biological weapons, Saddam—not Hollywood—will wag the dog."

We can understand politicians' reversing themselves so shamelessly, hypocrisy being the lifeblood of politics and all. But when a columnist does the same thing, it leaves us howling. ♦

Korea Advice

While Washington's attention is focused on whether the Bush administration will get a U.N. resolution it can live with on Iraq, the crisis with North Korea isn't going away. The Bush team, frankly, appears divided—some pushing the old (failed) approach of "engagement" and others (preoccupied by Iraq, the U.N., and the war on terror) just wishing the problem would vanish. But of course decisions about planned deliveries of fuel oil and the ongoing construction of the new nuclear reactors for North Korea need to be faced.

Into this muddle, some sanity: Last week, senators Jon Kyl and Jesse Helms, and representatives Chris Cox and Ed Markey, wrote President Bush suggesting three propositions that should guide any new policy: First, because of Pyongyang's behavior, the 1994 Agreed Framework is dead; second, North Korea should be made to pay through economic and diplomatic sanctions for its decade-long violation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty; third, the only solution to the problem is ultimately a change in regime there.

Don't think we need a change in regime there? Consider the latest from Pyongyang: It is now accusing Japan of breaking its word over the five kidnapped Japanese citizens—currently enjoying their first homecoming since they were abducted in 1978—for failing to force them to return to North Korea. Now there's one for the international law books! ♦

The Conservative Paul Wellstone?

When Paul Wellstone first came to the Senate in 1990, he famously bragged that he "detested" Jesse Helms.

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Peter Steiner

Still, Wellstone clearly admired Helms, telling friends he wanted to be remembered as the "liberal Jesse Helms." And Helms graciously paid tribute to his fallen colleague last week, saying, "Despite the marked contrast between Paul's and my views on matters of government and politics, he was my friend and I was his."

The comment says as much about Helms as it does about Wellstone, and while Helms, thankfully, is still around to harass liberals "on matters of government and politics," his will be a quieter voice after his retirement from Congress in January. Some conservatives, as they toasted Wellstone last week for his tenacity, ferocity, and eloquence, wondered if Jesse Helms would one day receive comparable treatment from the Left. We shall see.

Meanwhile, the folks at the Pentagon have kicked off the Helms tributes by awarding the senior senator from North Carolina the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service, the highest civilian award they bestow. The citation reads: "To Jesse A. Helms. For exceptionally distinguished service over three decades in the U.S. Senate, and as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee from 1995-2001." Our hearty congratulations. ♦

www.so-sue-us.com

In a rare victory for common sense, a federal judge ruled last month that Southwest Airlines does not have to revamp its website to make it more user-friendly for the blind. The suit was brought by Access Now, Inc., an advocacy group for the blind, and Robert Gumson, a blind man who was able to purchase a ticket on the Southwest site, but found it "extremely difficult."

One of THE SCRAPBOOK's favorite sites, *www.overlawyered.com*, has been keeping tabs on this long-running fight that pits, well, just about everyone with a website against the Americans with Disabilities Act.

U.S. District Judge Patricia Seitz ruled that the ADA applies only to "public spaces of accommodation" as specifically enumerated by Congress, such as hotels, schools, and restaurants. The decision states that the plaintiffs have "failed to establish a nexus between *southwest.com* and a physical, concrete place of public accommodation."

With a market of 1.5 million blind Internet users to tap into, big sites like AOL have already made provision for the blind, but this latest ruling will give the little guys some breathing room while the technologies get better and cheaper. ♦

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Casual

At Home on the Range

Last Monday, at a time when I'm normally enjoying a cup of coffee at my desk, I found myself shivering in the cold rain in Manassas, Virginia, inches away from a gun-wielding teenager, staring down the barrel of a shotgun. But don't get your hopes up. This wasn't the mugging of a foolish editor, in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The shotgun was a beautiful Italian-made thing (a Perazzi, for you cognoscenti, probably worth more than my car). The teenager was Olympic-hopeful Amanda Dorman, a deadeye trap-shooter who had flown in from Colorado for the day. And I was staring down the barrel of her gun because she was giving me some Zen-like pointers ("Don't aim") on how to wing clay pigeons. (I aimed and I missed, after which Amanda took over and gave new meaning to the word smithereens.)

From there it was off to the small-arms range, where I put in some quality time with other, equally expert instructors, who showed me how to safely aim and fire Glocks and Berettas and Colts and a small cannon called a Thompson Contender (you hard-core types can e-mail me for a complete list with model numbers). The marksmanship of the coaches was dazzling. Almost as impressive was the shameless way they exaggerated my abilities. They were as charming and unctuous as my reporter colleagues can be when they butter up a source. ("This can't really be your first time shooting a pistol.... All those targets you knocked down? ... That's really impressive.")

Journalists don't have Walter Mitty fantasies, they have George Plimpton fantasies. Getting to spend a day at the range with thousands of rounds of free ammunition at hand, in the company of some of the top-ranking shooters in America, fulfilled one of mine. So I don't want to hurt the feelings of the good folks at the National Shooting Sports Foundation, which hosted this event to allow a few media types to dip a toe into the "gun culture." I enjoyed their company and wish them well. But guys, you may want to think about diverting some of your outreach budget to St. Jude medals. Because explaining the "gun culture" to journalists who don't get it is likely to require the intervention of the patron saint of lost causes.

I don't think I was really the target demographic for this event. Where I grew up, I didn't know anyone who *didn't* own a gun. The very idea of a gun culture would have been as preposterous to us in southern Indiana as the idea of a water culture would be to a fish. Then I moved to Washington, where for years I didn't know anyone who did own a gun, and where I soon discovered that the supposed "culture" of my boyhood is believed to spawn psychopaths and serial killers.

Darren Gygi

Now it's true that there are people who are fascinated by guns, in the same way that there are people who are, say, fascinated by California wines or home theater systems. And in that limited sense, it's certainly fair to say that there is such a thing as a "gun culture." But that's not why the term is so often deployed these days. Rather, it's used by people who are hysterically hostile to guns, for the purpose of painting their fellow citizens who are not hysterical as dangerous and depraved.

What do I mean by hysterical? Well, ask yourself this. How many times in the last week and a half have you read or heard that the D.C. sniper received an "expert" marksmanship badge in the army? This is an exceedingly underwhelming detail on his résumé. Millions of veterans, including me, have that same badge. It means you have a pulse, paid attention to the drill sergeant at the firing range, and did what you were told. *Everybody* who's not washed out of boot camp gets some kind of marksmanship badge. It's the military equivalent of the Lake Wobegon effect. Yet many of the more breathless reports on John Muhammad's marksmanship badge made it sound as if it were a shocking lapse of judgment on the part of the U.S. military that he, like all recruits, had been instructed in how to handle a rifle. Imagine that: a military culture that teaches men to shoot.

So this is what the defenders of the gun culture are up against: a hysteria culture that's pretty much written them out of polite society. It's deeply unfair, of course. The shooting sports have their distinctive pleasures, as all my instructors last week eloquently attested. The firearms themselves are precision instruments, some of great beauty and impressive craftsmanship. A gun in the end is a tool like any other. What matters morally is the use to which it is put. And it's not as if guns are uniquely perilous instruments.

As six journalists and instructors stood shoulder to shoulder firing rounds into cardboard targets last week, the NPR guy pulled out his tape recorder. One of the expert gunmen backed up. Pointing at the microphone, he said, "Now there is a deadly weapon."

Richard Starr

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Korean Missile Crisis

William Kristol and Gary Schmitt are on the right track as far as North Korea is concerned in "Lessons of a Nuclear North Korea" (Oct. 28), but I do worry that people will get the idea that there's something wrong with engagement per se.

While Clinton-style engagement was counterproductive, engagement itself is necessary and beneficial as long as relations are governed by principles that make sense. It's important to keep the lines of communication open, especially to the people of North Korea. The more individual Americans (and South Koreans and Japanese and Taiwanese) can interact with individual North Koreans, the more North Koreans have a chance to see the outside world and communicate with people from it, the weaker the Pyongyang government will eventually become. We have to look at every possible way to erode that government's ability to rule, and engagement in its many forms is one important way.

Korean-language radio and television should be broadcast not only into North Korea itself but also into Siberia, where a lot of North Korean guest workers are employed doing work that gulag prisoners used to do in the same places gulag prisoners used to do it. I understand that in North Korea people compete for such jobs, sign on for a given period of time, and then rotate home. These work camps sound like a good target audience for whatever broadcast and print media we can get in there.

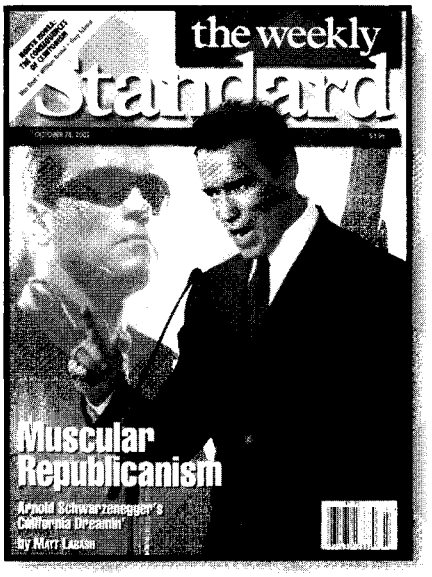
People forget that the period of détente with the Soviets, ushered in by Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik and highlighted by the Helsinki Accords, helped soften the Soviets up and make them more susceptible to the Thatcher-Reagan approach of later years. If the '70s had been different, and the Soviet leadership had seen the need to bring up some Russian version of Deng Xiaoping instead of guys like Gorbachev and Yeltsin, we might be living in a different world today.

We should always be ready to apply the stick or the carrot at the right moment to get the best results. I just hope that in the future everybody on our side has better sense than to trust Pyongyang enough to let it have a couple of nuclear carrots.

Jim McDonnell
Baton Rouge, LA

A few points seem to be left out of "Lessons of a Nuclear North Korea." The situation over there is hairy indeed: The United States has approximately 37,000 troops south of the DMZ, whereas North Korea has about 1,000,000 men poised to attack. Additionally, most of the "aid" given to North Korea after the 1994 agreement came from Japan, which therefore has a greater vested interest in keeping North Korea happy.

Kristol and Schmitt make a poor choice of words when they write: "But now, with the North Koreans having been caught in violation of the 1994



Agreed Framework . . ." North Korea wasn't caught, it divulged that information a day after being presented with some evidence that it had been building bombs. The Bush administration most likely assumed that North Korea would lie about the bombs and everyone could go his separate way.

In this instance the United States can't go after North Korea, in part because Washington has to be skeptical of the admission. Furthermore, the country can barely afford a war on terrorism and a war on Iraq, let alone adding a third front to an already taxed economy. North Korea is looking for a bribe, and will probably get it . . . from someone else. This shouldn't even be an American issue except maybe to broker another deal whereby China, Russia, and Japan divvy up responsibility and bribes for the new, nuclear North Korea.

Mitch Sobel
Jersey City, NJ

Vegans are People, Too

Congratulations to Wesley J. Smith for his review of the book *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy* ("Man and Beast," Oct. 28). Smith's analysis is insightful, and he's on the money about the author, too—Matthew Scully. Scully is indeed "a powerful and sometimes even inspired writer," and he is "an intelligent man" with a "big heart" for animals. Indeed Scully, who in his research for *Dominion* asked me for a copy of a paper on the ethics of intensified farming that I delivered to the World Conference on Animal Production in 1998, is a friend of mine. But I absolutely disagree with his arguments on animal welfare.

Smith puts it best when he says Scully's arguments are based on anthropomorphizing animals. Unfortunately, however, even Smith falls into this trap, granting the premise that so-called "factory farming" is cruel to animals. The fact missed by this premise is that "factory farming" wouldn't work if the animals were completely miserable.

There is a fundamental contradiction in the argument used by the animal rights crowd. On the one hand they assert that the impetus for intensified livestock operations is economic, i.e., bring as many animals to market weight as quickly as possible. And they are right. Where the animal rights crowd is wrong, however, is in arguing that this system is cruel and stressful for the animals. Quite simply, every farmer knows that stressed and mistreated animals don't gain weight and aren't healthy. And underweight, unhealthy animals create more overhead and production costs.

For example, Smith writes, "I prefer to purchase eggs that were obtained from chickens not kept in cages because I deem such husbandry to be more

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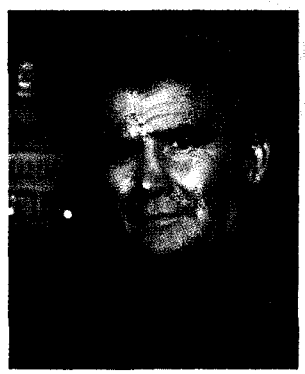

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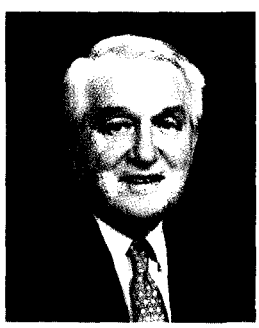

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humane." But when chickens aren't kept in cages, they violently peck at each other—hence the term "pecking order." Chickens are nervous and suspicious creatures; their natural impulse is to seek protection from predators, especially hawks overhead—that's the premise behind the children's story of Chicken Little. Being in an enclosed or covered area gives chickens a sense of security. As for swine, what's more cruel, a modern farrowing crate for the sow, or a baby pig crushed and suffocated by its mother? Which is more humane treatment of cows, artificial insemination which animal rightists decry, or live cover, where aggressive and heavier bulls frequently injure the young heifers they breed? What is better than a "factory farm"? The more traditional practice of tethering and nose rings?

Indeed, even those like Smith who "get it" about animal welfare needing to be put in context of human welfare—"access to such nutritious, inexpensive food provides tremendous human good to people on limited budgets," he writes, "which may be sufficient to justify this form of animal husbandry"—are still products of a society so removed from animal husbandry that we can no longer relate to the underlying meaning of terms like "pecking order" and stories like Chicken Little.

Or, as Smith himself writes, we are "so far removed from the struggle for daily survival that we have the luxury of caring about animals and their suffering." Thus our challenge as true stewards is to avoid anthropomorphizing animals into something they are not, at any level.

DAVE JUDAY
Berryville, VA

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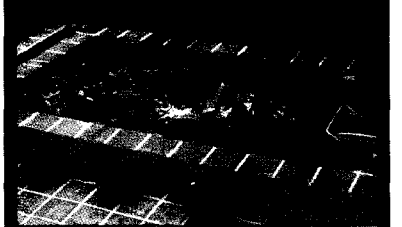

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WESLEY SMITH'S REVIEW of *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy* is flawed because it assumes that animal rights activists don't care about human welfare and that improved conditions for animals have negative effects on people.

Throughout history, many of the leading vegetarians and animal rights activists, such as Gandhi, Leo Tolstoy, George Bernard Shaw, Plutarch, and Isaac Bashevis Singer, were also outstanding humanitarians.

Smith indicates that factory farming, while very cruel to animals, provides inexpensive nutritious food for poor people. He ignores the tremendous governmental subsidies that the meat industry receives, and, more important, the epidemic of heart disease, cancer, and other degenerative diseases that have been conclusively linked to the consumption of animal products. He also fails to consider the very significant contributions that animal-based agriculture makes to air and water pollution, soil erosion and depletion, species extinction, the destruction of tropical rain forests and other vital ecosystems, and global warming. The production of animal products also uses enormous amounts of increasingly scarce water and gasoline. In addition, Smith ignores how the feeding of over 70 percent of the grain produced in the U.S. and almost 40 percent of the grain produced worldwide to farmed animals contributes to the death of an estimated 20 million people worldwide annually from hunger and its effects.

Other factors that Smith might have considered are the many times that animal experimentation has given misleading results because of species differences and differences between artificially induced diseases and naturally occurring diseases, and the high spousal abuse rates in areas where hunting is prevalent.

If Smith had considered these and other negative effects of our extensive mistreatment of animals, he might recognize that we must start applying the true biblical meaning of "dominion," responsible guardianship and stewardship, for the benefit of both human and non-human animals.

RICHARD H. SCHWARTZ
Staten Island, NY

PEACE PROCESSORS

AS A RETIRED U.S. Air Force master sergeant, I spent my last eight years under Bill Clinton, and Max Boot's "The Consequences of Clintonism" (Oct. 28) rings more true than even he could imagine. The issues Americans and the world are facing today can be laid directly at the feet of Clinton and his administration. His inept attempts at securing peace and his direct misuse of military power have caused his administration's so-called accomplishments to fall apart.

I pray that history is not kind to Bill Clinton—too many good Americans have shed their blood and lost their lives on his watch for him to be praised as a peacemaker.

JAMES FAUZEY, MSGT USAF (RET.)
Fairborn, OH

MAX BOOT'S ARTICLE contains the wonderful alliterative phrase, "professional peace processors." The phrase brings to mind the old *Shoe* cartoon by Jeff MacNelly:

Skyler: Where's your typewriter?

Shoe: I don't use a typewriter, I use a "word processor."

Skyler: Why is it called that?

Shoe: Well, you've seen what a food processor does to food, right?

And sure enough, the analogy extends to the "peace processors" of the world!

DON GREEN
Dunkirk, MD

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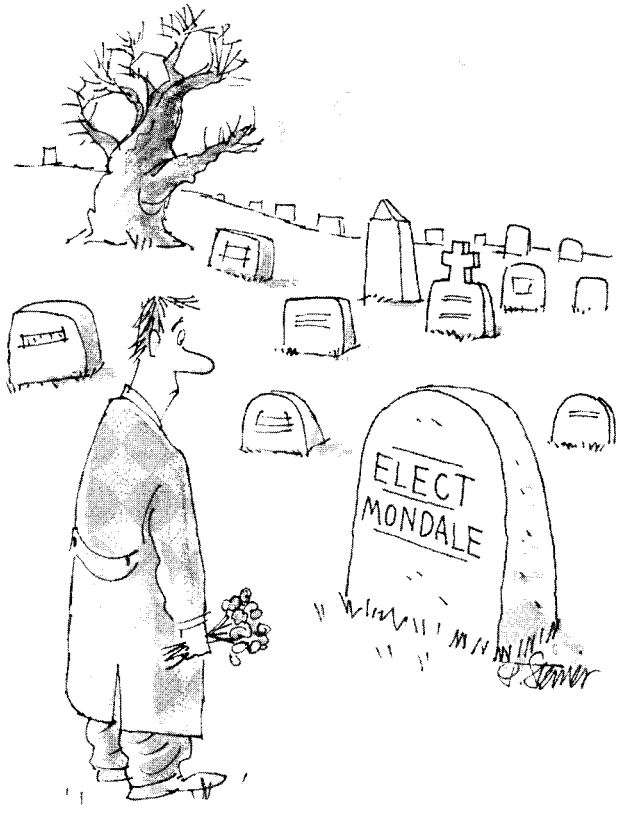
the weekly Standard

Mourning in America

It is no graveside cliché to say that the death of Paul Wellstone leaves a gaping void in American politics. Let's be clear about exactly *where* that gaping void lies. Iowa senator Tom Harkin's tribute to Wellstone as a man who "made a miner up on the Iron Range know that he was as important as the president of the United States" may have been true for some miners (and some presidents). Harkin may have been right to say that Wellstone fought "for those who mop our floors and clean our bathrooms, for those who take care of our elderly, take care of our sick, teach our kids, help our homeless." But the poor were Wellstone's topic, not his constituency. Wellstone's *constituency* was academic leftists. We don't doubt that his struggle helped rescue the poor on occasion. But the help they got was incidental to his larger struggle, which was to rescue the consciences of his fellow professors.



Peter Steiner

This is not an observation we make sneeringly. The tendencies Wellstone represented are a real and serious corner of our political landscape. We won't pretend to like this politics: With its obsessive focus on sexuality and race issues, its embrace of the anti-Western side in all conflicts, its combination of class privilege and class envy, its political correctness and its authoritarian speech codes, the leftism espoused almost unanimously on university faculties (and elsewhere) most often strikes us as irresponsible. And yet it can be granted that our professors are *under*-represented in the political system. For decades now, America has employed far more people in education than in agriculture. This is a country with more gender-studies professors than cowboys, more guidance counselors than stevedores, more admissions officers than sleeping-car porters. So who represents them in our Senate? It's true that there are a few senators in near-total sympathy with their university constituents; Hillary Clinton comes to mind. But Paul Wellstone, a Carleton College political science professor, was the only senator the academic Left could call its own. As such, he was the living symbol of the most important, most elite, most interesting—and possibly most dangerous—wing of our contemporary "progressive" politics.

It is in this context that the nationwide outrage over last week's "memorial service" for Wellstone at Williams Arena in Minneapolis is best understood. Millions of Americans—and 55 percent of Minnesota households—tuned in on television to watch a solemn commemoration and found a rally devoted to a politics that was twisted, pagan, childish, inhumane, and even totalitarian beyond their worst nightmares. The crowd of 20,000 *booed* a succes-

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sion of people who had come to pay their respects to a dead colleague: Senate minority leader Trent Lott, Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura, and former Minnesota senators Rod Grams and Rudy Boschwitz. Vice President Dick Cheney was disinvited from the affair. Former president Bill Clinton appeared on the Jumbo-Tron yuk-yukking and giving thumbs-up signs, looking happier than he had since . . . well, since Ron Brown's funeral. And most bizarrely, Wellstone's treasurer and friend Rick Kahn staged a confrontation with Republican representative Jim Ramstad and three senators (Domenici of New Mexico, Brownback of Kansas, and DeWine of Ohio) that was reminiscent of a Maoist reeducation camp. With the help of the mob, Kahn sought to bully and shame these Republicans into abandoning their party and supporting Walter Mondale, taunting: "We can redeem the sacrifice of his life, if you help us win this election for Paul Wellstone." And if they *don't* help . . . ? Small wonder Connecticut Democrat Chris Dodd was said to have apologized afterwards to his Senate colleague Domenici. It was a sinister incident, unexampled in recent American politics.

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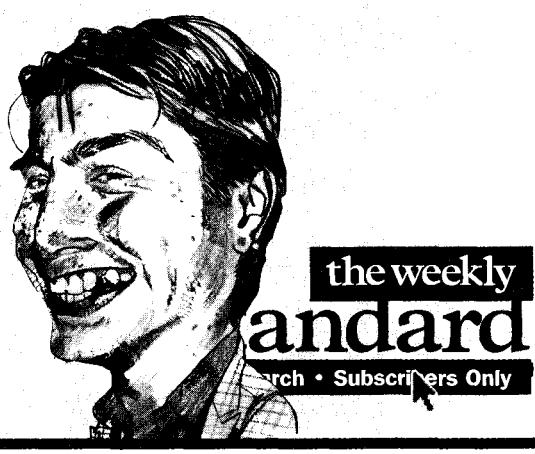

Most of those who watched this spectacle felt a disgust bordering on shame. Lott and Ventura walked out of the service, and Ventura announced he had changed his mind about appointing a Democrat to hold Wellstone's seat for the next two months. But such feelings arose from decency, not partisanship. Minnesota's Republicans, after all, have every reason to be delighted with the political fallout from this "memorial service." The Democrats' beyond-the-pale politicization of Wellstone's death opened the way for Republican Norm Coleman to begin campaigning again, his only chance of making up an 8-point poll deficit against Wellstone's replacement, former vice president Walter Mondale. Television stations were flooded with angry calls, and the GOP received $150,000 in spontaneously generated phone contributions since the service. GOP leader Ron Eibensteiner asked for equal air time, on the grounds that Minnesota's Democrats had exploited their colleague's death to bamboozle networks into running a three-and-a-half-hour campaign ad—and hardly anyone thought that was going too far. One journalist at WCCO in Minneapolis-St. Paul said his station felt "hoodwinked and embarrassed."

The real sin was not against Wellstone's political foes (or the people his "mourners" cast as his foes) but against Wellstone himself. As has often been remarked in the days since, one clip in the video portion of the event showed Wellstone saying, "Politics is not about winning for the sake of winning. Politics is about the improvement of people's lives." The service blew a gigantic raspberry at that worldview. The late senator was treated as little more than one broken egg in a great get-out-the-vote omelet. The pilots and aides who died with him were barely treated at all. This Machiavellian glibness in the face of death was what left viewers most uneasy. One of our major political parties, or at least a sizable wing of it, appeared to be dancing a jig on the grave of a particularly beloved fallen comrade. What must they think of the rest of us?

As his own campaign got underway towards the end of last week, Walter Mondale urged us to be forgiving of the affair. He asked us to remember that the people on stage "were talking about loved ones in their family who lost their lives." He's right. There can be no question of condemning Wellstone's own sons for the chants they led onstage, reeling as they are from the loss of both parents and a sister. Even Rick Kahn's Maoist denunciations may quite well have been the product of genuine grief. On a personal level, excesses in time of mourning are something all decent people will both understand and forgive.

But that does not make them any less frightening as expressions of mass politics. Even as we mourn Paul Wellstone—a man of integrity, candor, kindness, and wit—we ought to be on our guard against the aggression and inhumanity acted out in his name.

—Christopher Caldwell, for the Editors

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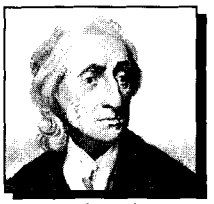
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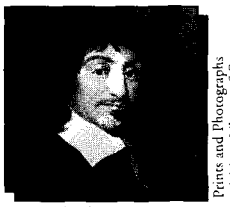
René Descartes

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DANIEL ROBINSON is a distinguished Research Professor of Psychology at Georgetown University since 1971. Since 1990, Professor Robinson has lectured in Philosophy at Oxford University, where he is a Faculty Fellow at Linacre College. He is past president of two divisions of the *American* Psychological Association: the *Division of History of Psychology* and the *Division of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology.* He is editor of the *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology.*

He is author or editor of more than 40 books, including *Wild Beasts & Idle Humours: The Insanity Defense from Antiquity to the Present* (Harvard, 1996), *An Intellectual History of Psychology* (3rd edition, Wisconsin, 1995), *The Mind: An Oxford Reader* (Oxford, 1998) *and Aristotle's Psychology* (Columbia, 1989).

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Campaign Pains

An election junkie's lament.

BY FRED BARNES

FOR DAYS, I called the campaign of Ron Kirk, the ex-Dallas mayor running for the Senate in Texas, to find out his schedule of campaign events. Or an assistant called on my behalf. We couldn't get the schedule. Only the press secretary could give out that information and, you guessed it, the press secretary wasn't available but would call back. Only he didn't call back. The most basic information about a campaign, where the heck the candidate is campaigning, simply was a secret, at least to me.

This is a recurring problem in campaigns all over the country. Nobody—not a receptionist or a deputy press secretary or a volunteer—is allowed to release the candidate's schedule. Now, you can always snoop around and discover it eventually, and I did in Kirk's case. As it turned out, he had a reason for keeping his plans private. He was going to San Francisco and Los Angeles for two days to raise money from liberal Democrats, the kind of Democrats who aren't popular in Texas. And he didn't want that fact trumpeted all over the state. For other campaigns, not disclosing the schedule is counterproductive. It diminishes coverage. Maybe they're just paranoid about the press.

Schedule secrecy is the first of my pet peeves about covering campaigns, annoyances that actually have changed a bit over the years as campaigns have changed. One change is the decline of the campaign event itself, which is another peeve of mine. This started in California and quickly spread. Here's the thinking behind this trend: Why waste the candidate's time at campaign appearances where few people will see him, when a TV ad will reach tens of thousands more people? The answer is a candidate still needs "free TV"—coverage on local news shows. But he can get that with a single event per day. There's no compelling reason to do five or six events when one meets the campaign's needs. Thus, candidates spend an inordinate amount of their time raising money for TV ads and do few public events.

Peeve three is campaign polls. There are more and more of them every election cycle. That's fine. I love polls. The problem is the failure of the press to distinguish between worthwhile polls and worthless ones. The first rule is that polls by a candidate's own pollster aren't as credible as independent polls. A pollster for a Democrat can exaggerate the size of the Democratic cohort in the election. That's what happened with a recent poll showing Kirk leading his Republican foe, John Cornyn. The Hispanic and black voting populations in the poll sample were far larger than they had ever been in real life. Yet many in the media treated the poll as no less reliable than any other. As a result, folks were walking around saying, "Kirk's up by 2." Non-campaign polls had him down by 5 to 10 percentage points.

But even independent polls should raise eyebrows, as Stuart Rothenberg noted recently in *Roll Call*. Just before scandal-tainted Democratic senator Robert Torricelli dropped out of the contest in New Jersey, a poll by John Zogby had him leading by 5 points. In the so-called internals of that poll, Torricelli was attracting twice as many Republican voters as his opponent was winning over Democrats. Not likely. Another poll showed Republican Lamar Alexander leading in the Tennessee race for the Senate, which he was, but running 25 points ahead among women, 9 points behind among men. Again, not likely, but only Rothenberg pointed it out.

Still another peeve of mine is the prissiness of the press in dealing with negative campaign ads on television. Many reporters act like attack ads are poison. TV spots that make personal attacks sometimes are. But the vast majority of negative ads deal with a candidate's record. What's wrong with making that a target? Isn't that what campaigns are supposed to be about, a candidate's record? It's from negative ads that voters learn the most about the candidates. The media, especially local TV, are too busy covering the horse race aspect—who's going to run, who's going to win?—of election contests. Or, as is increasingly the case, scarcely covering campaigns at all.

Finally, there's money. You'd think from the media that money was the only determinant of who wins—invariably the candidate who has the most. Not so. The truth is, there's a certain minimum amount needed for a candidate to get his message out and finance a reasonable get-out-the-vote effort. Beyond that, the return from spending more money decreases. Yet you'd never know this from the reporting on the subject. What fuels this problem is that figures on fundraising are now readily accessible to the press. This makes the job of reporting easier and reporters lazier.

Finally there's something that once peeved me but not any more—debates. The press insists on them, but I wasn't so certain they were critical to achieving an informed electorate. These days, however, with the press offering so little campaign coverage, debates are essential. The more, the merrier, within reason. Sure, some congressional and gubernatorial debates this year have been nasty, like the one in the Maryland governor's race when Republican Bob Ehrlich was booed while giving his opening statement. But the alternative—not having debates at all—is no longer acceptable. ♦

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Fool Us Once . . .

The North Koreans get ready to shake us down again. BY HENRY SOKOLSKI

As the Bush administration ponders how to respond to North Korea's defiant admission of having violated every nuclear nonproliferation pledge it ever made, it's worth recounting how we got into this mess.

Certainly, Pyongyang—currently armed with one or more nuclear bombs and a set of uranium and plutonium production facilities—is as keen to negotiate (read, to extort us again) as it ever was. Talks this time, though, won't be about denuclearization. North Korea insists it now has a right to atomic weapons and that giving up its nuclear arms would be tantamount to suicide. Instead of disarmament, what Pyongyang wants to secure is a nonaggression pact, after which it would be more than willing to "clear" the United States of "its security concerns"—whatever that means.

Is the United States up to dealing with an out-of-the-closet nuclear North Korea? If history is any guide, we are in for a rough ride. As far back as 1987, North Korea circumvented its 1985 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) obligations while the world—and Washington—blinked. Instead of allowing International Atomic Energy Agency inspections when the NPT required, Pyongyang put the inspections off as it continued constructing a military production reactor that had no connection to its electrical power grid. It then violated its bilateral 1992 commitment with South Korea not to build a plutonium chemical separation plant (a commitment Washington had bought by withdrawing its tactical nuclear weapons) and almost immediately was caught by international nuclear inspectors lying about how much nuclear weapons material it had produced. Finally, in 1993—with at least a bomb's worth of separated plutonium in hand—Pyongyang simply blocked further nuclear inspectors and announced it was bolting from the NPT.

KIM JONG IL

All too anxious to kick the can down the road rather than confront North Korea's nuclear cheating, the Clinton administration cut a weirdly generous deal that Pyongyang proceeded, once again, to violate almost immediately. Essentially Clinton caved to Pyongyang's demand for two modern U.S.-designed reactors. He also promised annual heavy fuel oil shipments equivalent to nearly 10 times the amount of energy North Korea might have produced if it had completed all the reactors it was planning. In exchange, Pyongyang promised to freeze work at its known plutonium producing facilities and *eventually* to come into compliance with its NPT obligations.

The deal required Pyongyang to prove it was out of the bomb-making business when roughly half of the U.S.-promised power reactor project was built. An accompanying classified minute—which Clinton agreed to and the North Koreans revealed only last week—secretly undermined this requirement. Unbeknownst to the public and most of Congress, this confidential memo freed Pyongyang from having even to begin to allow International Atomic Energy Agency inspections until *after* the reactor was half completed.

As generous as the deal was, Pyongyang went to work to dishonor it as soon as the ink was dry. In fact, within 24 months of its signing in October of 1994, U.S. intelligence judged that North Korea had already built two nuclear weapons. This meant that contrary to the deal's terms, which

Henry Sokolski is executive director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center in Washington, D.C., and author of Best of Intentions: America's Campaign Against Strategic Weapons Proliferation *(Praeger).*

Illustration by Earl Keleny

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required North Korea to "consistently take steps to implement" its 1992 pledge not to possess nuclear weapons, the intelligence community believed that Pyongyang was secretly hoarding them. Clinton administration officials knew this. They decided, however, to dispute the intelligence finding and instead had Madeleine Albright announce that the deal had "eliminated" the Korean nuclear threat.

Late in 1997 and 1998, though, additional intelligence emerged that Pyongyang was testing high-explosive implosion devices for nuclear weapons and was working at several potential covert nuclear weapons sites. The Clinton administration, heckled into action by Congress and news leaks, again slow-rolled the matter. After more than a year of "tough" consultations with North Korea (and a promise of an additional half million tons of food aid), Clinton at last sent U.S. experts to visit just one of the suspect sites. In the interim, newspapers reported that U.S. satellites photographed North Koreans removing equipment from the site. When finally inspected—surprise—the site was empty.

Unfortunately, one of the 12 suspect sites that the intelligence community tried but failed to convince Clinton officials to pay off Pyongyang to open up was Mount Chun Ma, which a North Korean defector to China revealed was "processing" uranium. Undaunted, the intelligence community, in March 1999, formally notified Clinton officials that North Korea was developing a covert uranium enrichment program, probably with help from Pakistan.

Several months later, Congress weighed in. It required Clinton to certify that North Korea was not secretly enriching uranium before giving North Korea any more heavy fuel oil. Clinton's response was nothing if not cheeky. He claimed North Korea was fully compliant with the nuclear deal, and that he lacked sufficient evidence to prove it was covertly working to enrich uranium. This drew congressional protests, but construction of the two promised U.S.-designed reactors—each capable of producing over 50 bombs' worth of weapons-grade plutonium in the first 12 to 15 months of their operation—continued, as did the heavy fuel oil shipments.

Then came the election of George W. Bush in November. All bets for further groveling before Pyongyang seemed to be off. The Clinton holdovers, though, soon sensed Bush's lack of a clear policy alternative to further appeasement and dug their heels in, producing a continuous working-level internal debate. Was North Korea's continued stiffing of International Atomic Energy Agency inspections a violation of the 1994 deal? The engagement faction said no, the regime change faction said yes. Construction of the two promised reactors continued, as did North Korea's covert uranium enrichment program.

Was North Korea's continued stiffing of the IAEA inspections a violation of the 1994 deal? The engagement faction said no, the regime change faction said yes.

Then something unexpected occurred: In December 2001, the intelligence community finally admitted publicly that it had judged in the mid-1990s that North Korea had "produced one, possibly two nuclear weapons." Although buried in a report to Congress on missile development, this finding immediately turned the spotlight on a disturbing question: If North Korea already had built one or more weapons and was hiding them in violation of the 1994 deal, wouldn't it be reasonable to assume that North Korea was still conducting a covert nuclear weapons program? The answer from the intelligence community: Probably, but since no one had yet asked the community formally to review the matter in a national intelligence estimate, it had no definitive view.

Why was there no such request? Almost certainly because Clinton officials knew what the answer would be—yes—and that that would spell the end of their 1994 deal. Sometime in the spring of this year, after heated internal debate within the Bush administration, the intelligence community finally was asked to do a formal estimate. The rest—including North Korea's angry admission to cheating when confronted with this intelligence—is now history.

What are we to make of all this? Two things.

First, our continued payment of nuclear blackmail has got to stop. Our diplomats have all but turned North Korea's nuclear cheating into a recreational diplomatic drug. Breaking the habit won't be easy, but continuing it is a one-way ticket to nuclear chaos. It not only will increase proliferators' contempt for U.S. and allied pleas for restraint, it will teach the world that a tyrannical state that succeeds in acquiring nuclear weapons will then get its way. At a minimum, the United States and its allies have to end their transfer of nuclear technology and fuel oil to Pyongyang. We also must figure out some way to penalize Kim Jong Il's regime for violating the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Certainly, North Korea is not going to self-disarm.

Second, we need to understand why the intelligence on North Korea's nuclear cheating was ignored for so long. Were the intelligence agencies too willing to play along with their political masters? Did they purposely pull their punches? Or did the policymakers simply ignore Langley's warnings? Congress and the executive need to find out. Failing to do so will only encourage a repeat performance of what went wrong. Next time, however, it will come at a much higher price. ♦

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Do-It-Yourself Regime Change

It worked in Serbia. Could it work in Iraq?

BY ELI J. LAKE

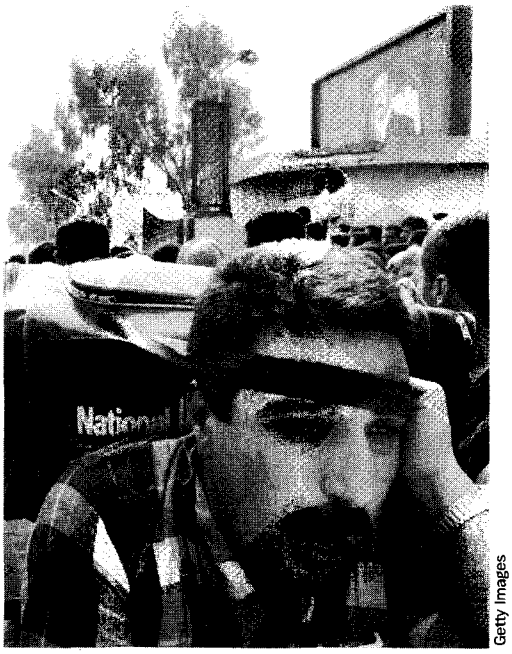
ON OCTOBER 20, Saddam Hussein blinked. In the face of an American president's resolve to disarm him, the Iraqi dictator opened the gates of his jails and freed his nation's thieves, rapists, and murderers. (Exempted from his amnesty were prisoners deemed American or Zionist spies.)

Two days later, a crowd of 200 people, most of them women, stormed the Ministry of Information in Baghdad demanding to know the whereabouts of relatives who had not been released. The same day, a larger crowd with similar questions pressed officials at a secret police detention center outside the city. On October 29, thousands of families in Erbil, a city in the north managed largely by the Kurdistan Democratic party, demonstrated in front of the United Nations mission to publicize the plight of their missing kin.

For a man who has survived his army's defeat in Kuwait, the uprisings and international sanctions that followed, and a series of attempted coups and rebellions in the last decade, Saddam Hussein seems to have made an uncharacteristic mistake on October 20. The tyrant's act of mercy may have emboldened his subjects.

As Kanan Makiya, author of *Republic of Fear*, a history of the Iraqi Baath party, said Wednesday, Saddam's amnesty decree "suggests the first cracks are appearing in the authority of the regime. This is a hint of things to come. It is a hint of how easy this war is going to be" to win. Some Saddam watchers in the U.S. government concur. "These demonstrations show there is increasing pressure on the regime. There is anger at the grass-roots level," one U.S. official said Wednesday.

There are some outside the government who believe last month's demonstrations may actually be key to toppling the Iraqi regime. About a month before the demonstrations in Baghdad, Peter Ackerman, a former investment banker and the founder of the International Center for Nonviolent Conflict, held a one-day seminar with 50 Iraqi exiles in the Netherlands to discuss how grass-roots anger can be used to bring Saddam's government down.



Getty Images

Freed prisoners in Baghdad

Ackerman has experience with this sort of thing. He conducted similar training seminars for Otpor, the student movement in Serbia that helped end the reign of Slobodan Milosevic. A proponent of regime change in Iraq who does not oppose the use of military force to secure that end, Ackerman believes that Iraq may be ripe for revolution without an American shot being fired. "These mothers who congregated are as much of a threat to Saddam as the mothers of the disappeared were in Argentina," he says.

At the recent seminar, Ackerman showed a video he produced entitled *Bringing Down a Dictator*. It chronicles the opposition movement in Serbia and shows how the Otpor campaign in the spring of 2000 paved the way for the demonstrations that followed a few months later. When residents of Belgrade stormed the parliament in October, the police refused to put down the riot. Had the police and military been confronted with violent demonstrators in the spring, they would have been more hostile to the demonstrators in October, or so goes the theory, and less willing to break their ties to the government. "When you remain nonviolent," says Ackerman, "those ties wither and erode. There is a strategic purpose to nonviolent tactics."

Between 1997 and 2000, the U.S. government poured approximately $22 million in covert and public funding into political resistance movements in Serbia. No such program on anything like that scale exists for Iraq. Most of the American initiatives to topple Saddam are aimed at supporting U.S. military intervention—military training for Iraqi exiles, for example, or an effort to identify potential high-level defectors in the Iraqi army (the CIA established two field offices in northern Iraq last month largely for this purpose). But the State Department has at least played an advisory role in Ackerman's recent activities, which include three meetings with Kurds in the last year.

Shortly after the seminar in the Netherlands, the Iraqi exiles who had

Eli J. Lake covers the State Department for United Press International.

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participated began calling their contacts in Iraq, according to one of the seminar's organizers, Ismael Zayer, who writes for the London-based Arabic newspaper *al-Hayat*. Zayer says that in the last month he and others have conducted small seminars in other Arab countries for the purpose of training Iraqis to organize. While conceding that the demonstrations following the release of prisoners were probably spontaneous, he confidently predicted in a phone interview Wednesday, "You will see more of these demonstrations in the future." And he added, "We do believe that the tactics of nonviolence and confrontation in Serbia can be repeated in Iraq very easily, and we are trying to go for it."

To this end, Zayer and others ran a "Say No to Saddam" campaign before the presidential "referendum" in September. The object was to persuade Iraqis to register a protest by submitting blank white pieces of paper instead of marked ballots. The outcome of the vote, according to the Iraqi government, was 100 percent in favor of the ruler, but Zayer says his contacts persuade him that several hundred thousand submitted blank protest votes.

And Saddam Hussein may be getting the message. Last week the tyrant kicked out most of the international media from his capital, a step many in the Bush administration fear may presage a crackdown. As one U.S. official said last week, "If there is another demonstration and nothing happens, then it's time to set your stopwatch. It will be inevitable the regime is going to fall."

The demonstrations in Baghdad and Erbil have placed the Iraqi government in a precarious position. The kind of massacre it would take to restore fear in his citizenry would compromise Saddam's effort to charm the international community on the eve of a new vote in the U.N. Security Council. The international community has ignored Saddam's cruelties before—but this time, it might see them as justifying the overthrow of his regime. ♦

Quagmire Nostalgia

The media are forever bogged down in Vietnam.

BY NOEMIE EMERY

"THE PAST IS NEVER DEAD, it's not even past," William Faulkner once said. He would have been right at home in the antiwar movement, where the past is now more present than ever, or at least more present than it has been since 1991. Every time war, or the threat of war, or the idea of war presents itself, the past emerges. And not just any old past, but one past in particular: the past of the Vietnam War. To the *New York Times*, the *New York Review of Books*, the academics, and the aging boomers who show up at the protests and rallies, this one war is war's template, the true model of what all wars must be like. Every war is seen as a quagmire, a possible quagmire, a likely quagmire, a quagmire waiting to happen. Quagmire nostalgia is moving the old folks, like Anthony Lewis and Frances FitzGerald, as they look back on their youth and their glory. Quagmire envy is seizing the students, who want to establish their own rites of passage, and long for a quagmire to call their very own.

The Q-word first resurfaced a year ago, in a lead story by R.W. Apple of the *New York Times* on October 31, 2001: "Like an unwelcome specter from an unhappy past, the ominous word quagmire has begun to haunt conversations among government officials and students of foreign policy, both here and abroad." Two weeks later, the Taliban was being driven out of Afghanistan, to the rapturous cheers of the citizens, but there are always green pastures for quagmire fans. If they look hard enough, they always see Vietnam, even in matters of style.

Noemie Emery is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

"It's this high-handedness that echoes the run-up to Vietnam," says Frank Rich of the administration's rhetoric about the war.

> The analogy can be overdone, certainly, since today's armed forces are highly unlikely to find Iraq a military quagmire and no one can even try to make a case for the legitimacy of Saddam's regime. But . . . the arrogance of this C.E.O. administration . . . recalls the hubris of those Ivy League and corporate "whiz kids" on Robert McNamara's Pentagon team who saw themselves as better and brighter than the rest of us.

And so it turns into an *ethical* quagmire. But if the Bush people run the war well, and don't lie about it when it's in progress, does it matter if they're "arrogant" or not?

Then there is of course Anthony Lewis, a decorated quagmire veteran, writing in that bible of quagmire, the *New York Review of Books*: "I kept thinking of one thing: Vietnam," he informs us. "Iraq is a large, modern, heavily urbanized country. If we bomb it apart, are we going to be wise enough to put it back together? . . . Here, as in Vietnam, the advocates are sure that American power can prevail—and sure that the result will be a happy one. But here, as in Vietnam, so many things can go wrong."

True enough, but then, as in so many cases, so many things can go right. Japan and Germany also were large, urban countries. We bombed them to pieces and put them back together, and those two worked out

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rather well. These examples, of course, are never considered by quagmire-mongers. Other wars—the Gulf War, for instance—are brushed from their minds as if they never existed. Implicit in this is the idea that Vietnam alone was the *real* war. Those that appeared more successful were exceptions, or luck-outs, or flukes. But history and common sense suggest something different—that it was *Vietnam* that was the aberration.

In 1947, when Truman, Eisenhower, and the people around them set down the predicates on which the Cold War was fought, they hit on a strategy of surrogate battles, supplying financial and military aid to countries who came under Communist pressure. This worked brilliantly for the next 40 years, in Europe, and even in Central America. But it tended to fail in the jungles of Asia, where many of the regimes being pressured were too inept, too corrupt, or too justly unpopular to use aid effectively, and where Communists tended to piggyback on authentic rebellions. Just what to do under these conditions was something the Wise Men could not figure out. Faced with a client state that was going to pieces, Americans had three possible options, none of them popular: (1) to pull out, and hand over the state to our enemy; (2) to keep pouring in aid, which was liable to be wasted; and (3) to take over the war themselves.

As Michael Barone points out in *Our Country*, Americans had poured billions into trying to save Nationalist China until Truman pulled the plug —and even then the angry cry of "Who lost China?" poisoned the political atmosphere for years to come. "By August 1949," he writes,

> Gallup found that Americans by a 48-23 percent margin expected that China would fall to the Communists. . . . Americans understood why it was impossible to keep Chiang Kai-shek in power, and, far from favoring military intervention . . . were strongly against it. . . . But Americans were nonetheless unhappy with the Communist triumph.

They took it out on Truman. His job approval rating sank from 57 percent in June 1949 to 37 percent a year later.

This was the mindset that produced Vietnam. From the war's start to its finish, Americans were never too certain if it was a civil war or an outside invasion, if it was a local event or an international movement, or if it was a vital national interest at all. It was a war never fully engaged and not quite withdrawn from, a recipe for neither cohesion nor victory. This confusion, these doubts, were the quagmire-makers. We will have wars with mistakes, wars that have setbacks, and campaigns that go badly.

The quagmire fanciers were unprepared to see the country right itself, remake its economy, reform its military, and start again to be proud.

We will likely never have another war like Vietnam.

The quagmire-predictors have come up short again and again. Stubbornly, quagmires refuse to develop—not in Bosnia, not in Central America; above all, not in the Gulf War. And since we mention the Gulf War, is it fair to note that most of today's quagmire nostalgists issued the same warnings then as today? Yes, it is, since they never acknowledged this, never admitted it, never confessed they were wrong. In fact, since Vietnam they have been wrong about everything, at least about everything concerning the world, power, and war. They were wrong on disarmament, wrong on the nuclear freeze, wrong on defense, wrong on the contras, and wrong, stunningly wrong, on the Gulf. The stumbles and fumbles never developed. They were not prepared for smart bombs, much less smart generals. Such things were not in their script.

And so the affection of quagmire fanciers for the era of the Vietnam War. That too-long but still brief bloody window—from 1967 to, say, 1974—was the one time in memory in which the real world matched the picture that these people have of their country—a bloody, inept, and dysfunctional culture, marked by violent death and inadequate leadership, where promising men were shot dead by psychotics, and dishonest presidents lied all the time. Into this troubled and violent era was packed a century's worth of assassinations, malaise, riots, and recession. It was capped, best of all, by the resignation of a (Republican) president they had long hated, who turned out even worse than they feared. They thought this was normal, but of course it was not. As prophets of doom, who one time were right, they were unprepared (and perhaps unbelieving) to see the country right itself, remake its economy, reform its military, stabilize its political system, and start once again to be proud of itself. Nothing annoys them more than the thought of Americans' being proud of themselves, so they're constantly on the lookout for disaster. Ronald Reagan was expected to bring war and depression; he ended the Cold War, and started a boom. They had great hopes for the Iran-contra scandal, which did not really hurt Reagan. And when another president at last was impeached, it was one of their own, an ex-Vietnam protester, William J. Clinton, Rhodes scholar and groper. And then of course they found themselves defending corruption, arguing noisily that obstruction of justice wasn't that bad after all.

And so they go back, like a sow to its furrow, to the cool mud of their quagmire, where presidents are always corrupt and deluded, and armies inept, and they alone are enlightened. "In a real dark night of the soul," said F. Scott Fitzgerald, "it is always three o'clock in the morning, day after day." To the professional antiwar movement, it is always 1968, the dark night of the American soul. And it is, of course, always pitch dark, the way they like it. ♦

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Baltimore, MD— As unbelievable as it seems the key to stopping many cancers has been around for over 30 years. Yet it has been banned. Blocked. And kept out of your medicine cabinet by the very agency designed to protect your health—the FDA.

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They walked away from traditional cancer treatments...and were healed! Throughout the pages of *How to Fight Cancer & Win* you'll meet real people who were diagnosed with cancer—suffered through harsh conventional treatments—turned their backs on so called modern medicine—only to be miraculously healed by natural means! Here is just a sampling of what others have to say about the book.

"We purchased *How to Fight Cancer & Win*, and immediately my husband started following the recommended diet for his just diagnosed colon cancer. He refused the surgery that our doctors advised. Since following the regime recommended in the book he has had no problems at all, cancer-wise. If not cured, we believe the cancer has to be in remission."

—Thelma B.

"I bought *How to Fight Cancer & Win* and this has to be the greatest book I've ever read. I have had astounding results from the easy to understand knowledge found in this book. My whole life has improved drastically and I have done so much for many others. The information goes far beyond the health thinking of today."

—Hugh M.

"I can't find adequate words to describe my appreciation of your work in providing *How to Fight Cancer & Win*. You had to do an enormous amount of research to bring this vast and most important knowledge to your readers.

My doctor found two tumors on my prostate with a high P.S.A. He scheduled a time to surgically remove the prostate, but I canceled the appointment. Instead I went on the diet discussed in the book combined with another supplement. Over the months my P.S.A. has lowered until the last reading was one point two."

—Duncan M.

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"As a cancer patient who has been battling lymphatic cancer on and off for almost three years now, I was very pleased to stumble across *How to Fight Cancer & Win*. The book was inspiring, well-written and packed with useful information for any cancer patient looking to maximize his or her chances for recovery."

—Romany S.

"I've been incorporating Dr. Budwig's natural remedy into my diet and have told others about it. Your book is very informative and has information I've never heard about before (and I've read many books on the cancer and nutrition link). Thanks for the wonderful information."

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Killing Christians

The underreported story of Islamist violence around the world. BY AMITAI ETZIONI

ON OCTOBER 17, bombs killed 6 people and wounded 143 in Zamboanga, the Philippines. While press accounts mentioned in passing that the victims were Christians, few conveyed to the reader that these were people assaulted by Muslim extremists because of their religion. On September 25, militant Muslims shot dead 7 Christian Pakistanis execution style in Karachi. Most of the media failed to report this at all, though it was at least the fifth bloody attack on Christians in Pakistan in the last twelve months.

And the media almost never point out that Christians are being killed, often at places of worship, in several countries with Islamic majorities or governments, not because they are Westerners or Americans (many are neither) but because they are Christians. Nor is the White House or Congress nearly as attentive—to put it mildly—to this pattern of killing as it is to any injury on either side of the conflict in Israel.

People who follow international news are aware that a civil war raged in Ethiopia for more than 30 years. But few realize that it was a religious war—between Muslim Eritrea and Christian Ethiopia—in which tens of thousands perished. Many know that the people of East Timor were savaged, but it is rarely mentioned that most East Timorese are Christian, while the Indonesian militants who killed many of them and brutalized the refugees in West Timor are Muslim. Indeed, Christians in other parts of Indonesia have hardly fared better; for instance, thousands died during riots in the Moluccan Islands in 2000.

The bloody war in the Sudan, similarly, pits the Muslim government in the North against the Christian and animist South. And in Nigeria, as Muslims try to impose a strict version of the legal code called *sharia* in several provinces, armed conflicts between Muslims and Christians have erupted and thousands have died. Just lately, in the Ivory Coast, Muslims in the North have been attacking Christians in the South. On a smaller scale but very much along the same lines, scores of Coptic Christians were killed in Egypt in January 2000; several churches were burned in Kenya the following year.

It seems somehow inflammatory to point to the religious element of these and many other conflicts. Nearly every day, meanwhile, some scholar assures us that Islam is a peaceable and loving religion. What is going on here?

From the beginning, Islam drew a distinction between Christians and Jews and other non-Muslims. The former were "people of the book." They had to pay special taxes and wear identifying clothing, yet their status reflected a certain respect for what Muslims saw as the earlier but incomplete and corrupted revelation recorded in the Bible. In the modern period, Christians and Jews are typically called *Kuffr*, or infidels. In countries under strict *sharia*, apostasy is a capital crime, and in the minds of extremists like Osama bin Laden, infidels too deserve death. While Muslim societies differ widely in their levels of tolerance, pluralism, and religious freedom, full respect for Christianity is virtually absent.

This matter came up last spring at a conference held by Iranian reformers in Isfahan. The gathering brought together a number of Islamic and Western intellectuals in opposition to the thesis advanced by Samuel Huntington of Harvard University that Western and Islamic civilizations are bound to clash. During his presentation, Ebrahim Moosa, an imam from South Africa now teaching at Duke University, urged that Islam be recast so as to accommodate liberal attitudes. He stressed the need for three changes: recognition of women's equality with men; toleration of capitalism; and recognition of the full dignity and humanity of nonbelievers. But we are still waiting to hear from many other Muslim leaders as to whether they wish to move Islam in this direction.

The White House has solid tactical reasons for stating and restating that our fight is only with terrorists, not Muslims. We must face the fact, however, that while the prophet has many moderate followers, the terrorists command great sympathy in the Islamic world not only because Islamic populations are anti-American or anti-Western, but also because the terrorists are attacking infidels. An elderly Afghan freed from detention at Guantanamo last week made a telling statement to a *Washington Post* reporter: "The Americans treated me well, but they were not Muslims, so I didn't like them."

It is true that other religions have passed through violent and intolerant phases. And it is possible that moderate interpretations of Islam may again come to predominate. But we shall be unable to recognize and foster that development if we refuse to acknowledge that the violence currently erupting in many parts of the Islamic world is aimed not simply at the political and economic leadership of the West but also at its Judeo-Christian tradition. When Christians and Jews are no longer characterized as *Kuffr*, we shall know we have turned a corner. ♦

Amitai Etzioni is a university professor at George Washington University and the author of The New Golden Rule.

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NOBODY KNOWS

President G.W. Bush reversed field: He directed Vice President Cheney and Secretary Rumsfeld to personally handle the matter with Saddam Hussein. This, he did because both were hawks.

Dubya ordered both to invite and protect Saddam upon a crucial and special visit of short duration to the United States.

"A little slower," politely suggested that excellent negotiator, Benjamin Franklin. "This had better make sense, my friend."

"All I can do is try," I said. "Let's just say the deal is done, signed, sealed and delivered. That's the best way to look at it."

"O.K., so?"

"Saddam is fully informed by Cheney and Rumsfeld," I continued. "He comes to America. He's given a 'bully pulpit,' you may call it. He speaks before the congregation in the nation's most prestigious synagogue. The only condition is that he's conciliatory," I suggested.

"Continue," Mr. Franklin asked me.

"The precise same terms are set for Mr. Sharon of Israel. He is invited to address a congregation of Iraqis in the most prestigious mosque."

"Next?"

"Well, now you've got both in a holy place. If that's easy enough to do, as it should be, you're off to a good start. After all, what's there to lose when there's so much to gain?" I said.

"Go on."

"Both speak from their 'bully pulpit.' Both complain. Both accuse. But in God's house, Saddam and Sharon are conciliatory," was my thought.

"Then?"

"Saddam announces the establishment of an Iraqi foundation to benefit the Israeli families whose loved ones were killed or wounded over time," I said.

"Anything else?"

"Sharon does the same, precisely. There's, maybe, a question of who talks first. If so, both events are planned for the same time," was my suggestion.

"What happens next?"

"In spite of the tasteless, unprovoked slander coming from the head of the Nobel Peace Prize directed at President G.W. Bush, Saddam and Sharon are both awarded the Peace Prize," I told Mr. Franklin.

"And what about President Bush?" Ben Franklin wondered.

"Oh, he's the real winner. It's his idea to implement. He wins another four years in the White House if he wants it," I thought.

"Can you trust either Sharon or Saddam?" Mr. Franklin asked.

"Who knows anything for sure?" I replied. "But I'll tell you this: If in God's house one or both can't tell the truth, what truth is there left between God and man? Who is left to believe in anything?" Too idealistic? The one who lies in the house of God is the Godless one. Therefore he's the real enemy at large. He's isolated and he's lost his friends and allies."

"Now, my friend, as for your and my thoughts," Mr. Franklin told me. "Don't make light of this serious situation. Don't be foolish or seem a little odd."

"I know, I know," I said. "Since I'm a nobody, then only a nobody gets criticized."

"There's something to that," he told me. "But who knows? Maybe it will make you a somebody, if from what you think a better idea is born."

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Saddam's Brain

The ideology behind the thuggery

By David Brooks

When faculty members at the Sorbonne gather to discuss who should get the prize for most evil alumnus, they probably rehash all the familiar names—Pol Pot, mastermind of the Cambodian genocide; Abimael Guzman, leader of Peru's Shining Path guerrilla movement; and Ali Shariat, the intellectual godfather of the Iranian revolution. But they really should give serious consideration to Michel Aflaq.

It was Aflaq, a Syrian intellectual and political organizer, who founded the Syrian and Iraqi Baath parties. It was Aflaq, too, who in 1963 elevated Saddam Hussein to the Regional Command in Iraq's Baath party, and so set him on his course to dictatorship. And it was Aflaq who laid down the ideology that continues to dominate Saddam's thinking today. Saddam Hussein, after all, isn't a general who took over a government by means of a military coup. He's not only a thug, a ruthless tribal leader, a Don Corleone-style Godfather, a power-mad dictator. He is first and foremost a political activist, a party man.

Saddam grew up as a cadre in the highly ideological and dogmatic Baath party structure. His speeches, from the time he entered government in 1968 until today, have had a consistent ideological, pseudo-intellectual character, even if in the past decade a layer of Islamist rhetoric has been added. From his first declarations to his last, he has always presented the Arabs as the master race, whose history and accomplishments are glorious. He has always had a mystical belief in self-purification through violence, the notion that the soul is elevated through warfare and killing. And most important, he has always been committed to the life of relentless struggle, of ever-widening wars and confrontations, of perpetual revolution, which undermines all objective truth, all stability, all possibility of rest and peace. He has believed all this in the name of some final and transcendent conquest for himself and the Arab nation.

These beliefs and habits of mind he absorbed from the Baath party, and ultimately from its founder-leader. "It is Michel Aflaq who created the party and not I," Saddam told an interviewer in 1980. "How can I forget what Michel Aflaq has done for me? Had it not been for him, I would not be in this position." It was Aflaq whom Saddam installed in a top party post once he became dictator. It is Aflaq whom Saddam cites when he insists, as he does frequently, that the Baath party is not like other parties. Instead, he says, it is a believer's creed, similar in faith and purpose to early Islam, which offers "spiritual ascendance in the process of the nation's uplift" through "great deeds in conquest, liberation, justice, altruism, and flexibility."

In their statements, the Iraqi opposition forces refer to the government of Iraq as the "Aflaqite regime," emphasizing that the regime is not just one evil man; it is a party structure organized around a transcendent ideology, an ideology that produced the monster Saddam, but that is bigger than any individual.

Michel Aflaq was born in Damascus in 1910, a Greek Orthodox Christian. He won a scholarship to study philosophy at the Sorbonne sometime between 1928 and 1930 (biographies differ), and there he studied Marx, Nietzsche, Lenin, Mazzini, and a range of German nationalists and proto-Nazis. Aflaq became active in Arab student politics with his countryman Salah Bitar, a Sunni Muslim. Together, they were thrilled by the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party, but they also came to admire the organizational structure Lenin had created within the Russian Communist party.

In the early 1930s, Aflaq and Bitar returned to Damascus, where they played at being radical intellectuals. They did some teaching, contributed to magazines, and prowled around the cafés preaching revolution. Once back in Syria, Aflaq rejected all Western thought and for the rest of his life denied that Western ideas could have any relevance to the higher civilization of the Arabs.

In 1940, Aflaq established a study circle in Damascus called the Movement of Arab Renaissance, which in 1947 transmogrified into the Baath party, Baath meaning res-

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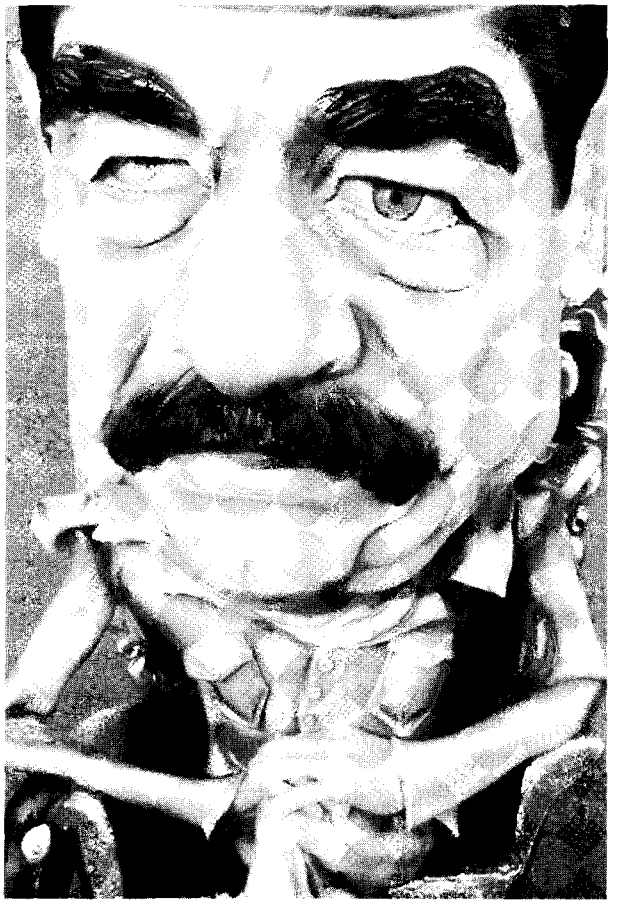
urrection or renaissance. Aflaq and Bitar ran unsuccessfully for parliament three times each, but they began to win a following among educated, mostly lower-middle-class men in Syria and to a lesser extent in Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon. By the mid-1950s, the Baath party had become a major force in Syria, thanks in part to its merger with the Arab Socialist party, and Aflaq became secretary general and chief ideologist. Intense, ascetic, and by some accounts effete, he was not cut out for politics. In 1966, he lost an intraparty power struggle and left for Lebanon, then Brazil.

Two years later Saddam and his Iraqi Baath cadres staged a successful coup and took control of their nation in the name of Baathism. They invited Aflaq to settle there, which he did, eventually leading the National Command of the Iraqi Baath party. Aflaq spent the last 15 years of his life as the inspiration and cheerleader for all things Saddam. He died in 1989, and the Iraqi government claimed, dubiously, that on his deathbed he had converted to Islam.



The slogan of the Baath party is "Unity, Freedom, Socialism." Unity means Arab unity. Freedom means freedom from imperialist oppression. And socialism in the Baathist sense is drained of almost all its economic content. Aflaq, like his party, was uninterested in economics. Instead, socialism seems to refer to a way of life, to a life committed to revolution.

The phrase most associated with Aflaq and the Baath party is "Arab nationalist." These days, it's common to say that Arab nationalism was a secular movement that has been displaced by Islamic fundamentalism. But as the Iraqi exile Kanan Makiya points out in his brilliant and indispensable portrait of Saddam's Iraq, *Republic of Fear*, Arab nationalism as Aflaq conceived it is not a secular concept. The Arab Nation for him is a transcendent spiritual force, a bit like Hegel's concept of the Spirit of History. The Arab Nation is the ideal around which human history ascends. The Arab Nation is the culmination of all values. Arabs attain spiritual perfection when they achieve solidarity with the Arab Nation and purge themselves of the cancerous influences of the West. "Nationalism is not an idea," Aflaq wrote. For Arabs to become nationalists, "they need to forget what they have learned so that they can return to a direct relationship with their pure original nature."

Though born a Christian, Aflaq believed that Islam provides Arabs with "the most brilliant picture of their language and literature, and the grandest part of their national history." He did not see the confrontation with the West in Muslim versus Christian terms. Arguing that all three great religions originated in the Middle East, he asserted that "religion entered Europe from the outside, therefore it is alien to its character and history." Europeans and Americans, he believed, cannot really be Christian or religious or highly spiritual in the rich way that Arabs can.

Aflaq's writings were vague and pathetic whenever he tried to address concrete situations, but he did apparently have a gift for painting glorious pictures of future triumph, which appealed to those with a nagging sense of national humiliation. Like a lot of intellectuals of the middle of the twentieth century, Aflaq also spent time theorizing about the revolutionary process. The Baath saw themselves as strugglers, as people engaged in a permanent revolution aimed at uniting them with the inner perfection that is Arabism. The Baath party, Aflaq felt, embodying the transcendent Arab spirit, needed to be ruthless against those who did not share its beliefs. Moreover, it was through this combat, or struggle, that the Baath could achieve Arab perfection. As Aflaq wrote:

"In this struggle we retain our love for all. When we are cruel to others, we know that our cruelty is in order to bring them back to their true selves, of which they are ignorant. Their potential will, which has not been clarified yet, is with us, even when their swords are drawn against us."

Struggle necessarily involves sacrifice, he emphasized,

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but amidst fiery conflict and bloodshed, each person "is forced to return to himself, to sink into his depths, to discover himself anew after experience and pain. At that point the true unity will be realized, and this is a new kind of unity different from political unity; it creates the unity of spirit among the individuals of the nation."

When Saddam Hussein joined the Baath party in Iraq in the 1950s, it had only about 300 members. But it was developing the Leninist party structure that Aflaq had observed in France. There were local cells, divisions, and branches, culminating in the ruling elite, the Regional Command and the Regional Command Council. The Arab Socialist Baath party, or ABSP, developed internal security and intelligence networks and even theoretical journals to develop party dogma. From the first, party statements were marked by a highly charged ideological style, which separated the world into the party of pure good (the Baathists themselves) and the party of pure evil (just about everyone else). As Tariq Aziz, a longtime party leader, noted in the 1980s, "The ABSP is not a conventional political organization, but is composed of cells of valiant revolutionaries. . . . They are experts in secret organization. They are organizers of demonstrations, strikes, and armed revolutions. . . . They are the knights of the struggle."

Once in power, the party behaved, in some respects, as Leninist parties do everywhere. It built a parallel party structure on top of the normal government bureaucracy to enforce loyalty and conformity. It established its own army, in addition to the regular Iraqi army, and its own intelligence service, which at first was given the otherworldly name the Apparatus of Yearnings. Ambitious young people were compelled to join the party if they hoped to rise, or even study abroad. Leaving the Baath party to join another political group remains in Iraq a crime punishable by death.

Baath party documents are peculiar because they are at once hysterical and pseudoscientific. They are filled with highly charged calls for bloodshed, heroism, and martyrdom, and at the same time they are tortured and pompous. For example, in the 1970s, the party engaged in a characteristic bit of Orwellian calisthenics to prove that in its case, a minority is actually a majority:

"Every party, including the ABSP, constitutes a minority in proportion to the population. . . . But when it represents, by its will and daily conduct, the people's will, when its acts correspond to the people's objectives, in present and future calculations, then it constitutes a majority."

That style of prose, with its abstract categories, oracular tone, and twisted logic, can be found in party documents from Stalin's Soviet Union to Mao's China. Nonetheless, Tariq Aziz is right. The Baath party is not quite like the Communist parties. It bears stronger resemblance to the Nazi party because it is based ultimately on a burning faith in racial superiority. The revolution, in Saddam's terms, is not just a political event, as the Russian or French revolution was a political event; it is a mystical, never-ending process of struggle, ascent, and salvation.

As you read through Saddam's speeches and declarations, it is impossible to miss the Aflaqian tones and messages. Saddam gets fevered whenever he discusses the subject of the Arab *volk*. For example, in a speech to the Iraqi people last year, Saddam declared, in a characteristic outburst, "You are the fountain of will power and the wellspring of life, the essence of earth, the sabers of demise, the pupil of the eye, the twitch of the eyelid. A people like you cannot but be, with God's help. So be as you are, and as we are determined to be. Let all cowards, piggish people, traitors, and betrayers be debased."

He has extremist expectations for the Arab nation because he believes it has been assigned by God an eschatological mission. "We can state without hesitation that our nation has a message," he told an interviewer. "That is why it can never be an average nation: Throughout our history our nation has either soared to the heights, or fallen into the abyss."

In this mystical form, Saddam's pan-Arab zeal has managed to survive the death of pan-Arabism as a practical political project. Saddam's historical frame of reference is much wider. He leaps back to ancient glories and imagines future supremacy 500 or 1,000 years away. He fills his speeches with references to Nebuchadnezzar and Saladin, and one always gets the sense that he doesn't see them as distant figures, but as living presences, revived in him for the purpose of carrying forward the Arab spirit.

The inferiority of other peoples is also a frequent refrain. In one interview Saddam said that Arabs should never be Communists because there is nothing they could profitably absorb from a European idea, though it is perfectly acceptable for Africans or other inferior races to adopt communism as their creed:

"What does an African in Rhodesia have to lose when he adopts Marxism, since he does not have the historical depth or the intellectual heritage of the Arab nation, a heritage which offers all the theories necessary for a life of change and progress. The Arab nation is the source of all prophets and the cradle of civilization."

The United States does not escape his disdain either. His addresses are filled with references to "disease loving" Zionists and Americans. But interestingly, he does

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seem to recognize that the United States is the other nation on earth with a vibrant sense of mission, the living belief that its form of government is the last best hope of earth. The United States therefore is his ultimate rival. In January 2002, he declared:

"The Americans have not yet established a civilization, in the deep and comprehensive sense we give to civilization. What they have established is a metropolis of force. . . . Some people, perhaps including Arabs and plenty of Muslims and more than these in the wide world . . . considered the ascent of the United States to the summit as the last scene in the world picture, after which there will be no more summits and no one will try to ascend and sit comfortably there. They considered it the end of the world as they hoped for, or as scared souls suggested it to them."

That passage gives a sense of the eschatological frame of Saddam's thinking: Someday there will be a great historical culmination. Some nation, some people, will establish permanent dominance over the earth. It will realize all values, bring to culmination all hopes, and ascend to permanent glory. This is not a set of beliefs Saddam developed on his own. He inherited it from the zealous ideology on which his party was built.

Aside from this radioactive faith in the holy mission of the Arab people, the other great Aflaqian concept that appears and reappears in Saddam's speeches is the concept of ascendance through perpetual revolution and struggle. The word "revolution" has a special meaning for Saddam, and it is worth quoting a few of the speeches and interviews in which he uses the word in novel ways:

"That is why a Revolution has no beginning and no end; it is not like a war, and its soldiers must not profit from its spoils. It is something continuous, it is a message to life, and the human being is only the bearer of the message."

"The Revolution chooses its enemies, and we say chooses its enemies because some enemies are chosen by it from among the people who run up against its program and who intend to harm it."

"The Revolution has its eyes wide open. Throughout all its stages the Revolution will remain capable of performing its role courageously and precisely without hesitation or panic, once it takes action to crush the pockets of the counter-revolution."

Sometimes when you read Saddam talking about the revolution you think you are reading Darth Vader talking about the dark side of The Force. The revolution is everywhere. The revolution is all seeing and never-ending. The revolution is God and salvation. And somehow Saddam himself is merged with the revolution.

One feature of the revolution that Aflaq articulated and Saddam absorbed is that it erases and supersedes all objective values. Since the revolution is permanent and relentless, standards of judgment must be flexible so as to be adapted to the latest demands of the revolution. Even facts must give way to the needs of the revolution.

It's odd, but in the middle of his declarations Saddam will occasionally launch into a pseudo-intellectual disquisition on epistemology, on how we know what we know. We cannot rely on one "true" set of criteria to make our judgments, he declares, because the changing needs of the revolution supersede truth.

In 1977 Saddam delivered a speech to a group of history teachers in which he lectured them to put Baathist analysis before the facts: "Those researchers and historians who call themselves objective might very well be presenting different viewpoints and possibilities to explain one event, . . . leaving it to the reader to draw his or her own conclusions. . . . The Baathist must never deal with history and all other intellectual and social questions in this way. . . . The writing of history must take on the same specificity as our Baathist way; in other words the writing of Arab history should be from our point of view with an emphasis on analysis and not realistic story telling."

In July 2002, Saddam delivered a speech in which he emphasized that all principles, even Baath principles, are relative. "Truth" is determined by the revolution's immediate needs. Real Baathists refuse to be guided by the principles of their founding, Saddam said, or even by the principles they adhered to six years ago. Rather, they are guided by the needs of the future. "It is ascension, ascension, and ascension" that guides the revolution. "Our decisive criterion," he concluded, "when there are various alternatives and visions in front of us, is not the modest picture, but the highest and purest state." This is what distinguishes the Baath regime from all other regimes.

In dealing with Saddam, then, we are not dealing with a normal thug or bully, but with a missionary whose lofty ideology has not changed in four decades, even as it has acquired, over the past few years, some Islamist drapery. The ideology of Baathism calls for relentless struggle, ever-widening conflict, until some ideal culmination of history is achieved. The Baathist ideology makes all agreements arbitrary, just as it makes all legal standards arbitrary and all truth arbitrary. That which serves the needs of the revolution is true for that moment. The revolution and Saddam ruthlessly abandon any truth or principle or agreement that no longer meshes with the need to achieve the glorious state of spiritual perfection. Break-

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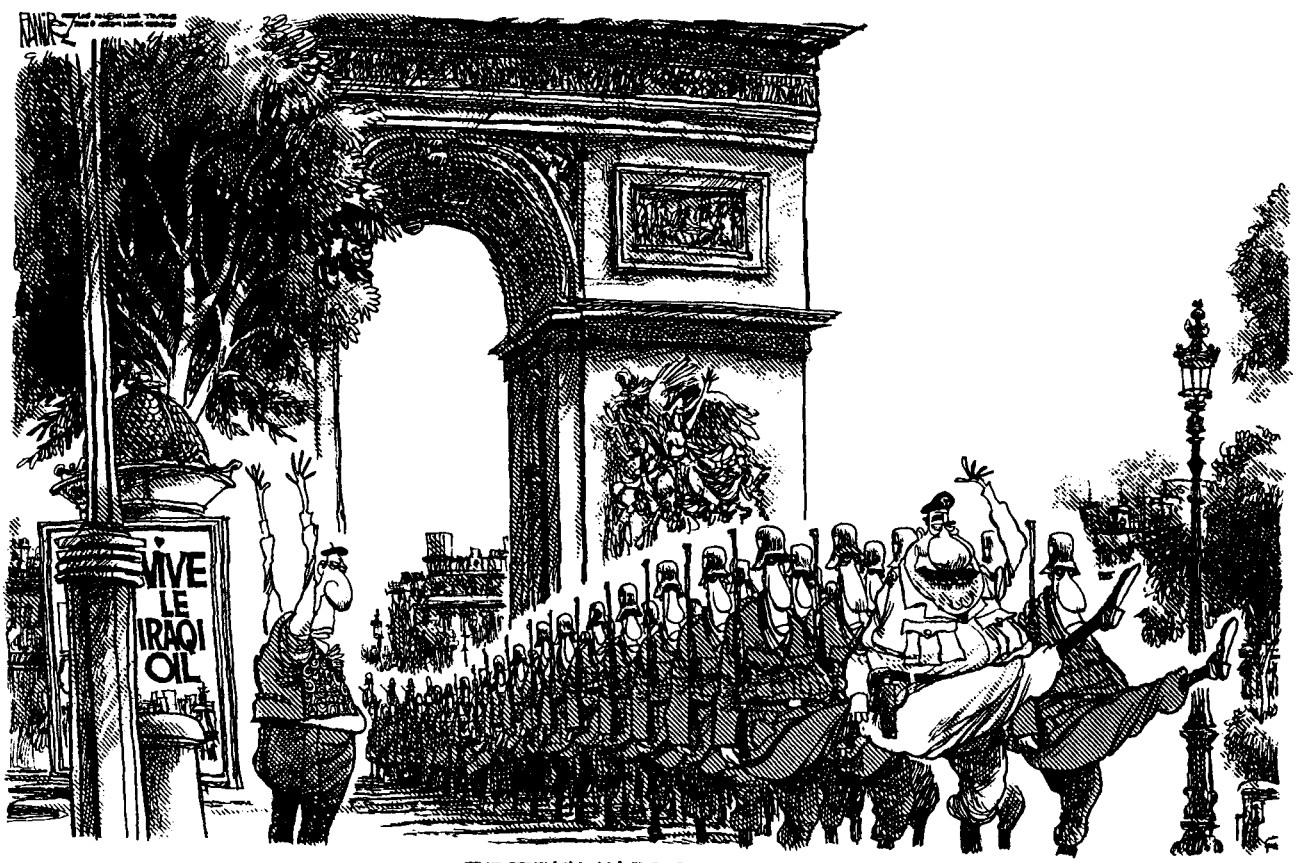
ing agreements is not something Saddam does shamefacedly. It is something he does proudly. It is consistent with the holy doctrine of his party.

The Baathist ideology requires continual conflict and bloodshed. Saddam likes to call himself The Struggler, and his rule has been marked by incessant strife. He led his nation through a bloody eight-year war with Iran that produced World War I level casualties, a ruthless campaign of genocide against the Kurds, the invasion of neighboring Kuwait, a war with the United States and the rest of the world, civil wars in the north and south of his country, and now another potential war with the United States and its allies over weapons of mass destruction. There has been no respite. The Baathist ideology commands that there be no respite. The Baathist ideology allows no remorse over the mass murder of those who belong to racially inferior groups. Once a dictator assumes the Aflaqite belief in the superiority of the Arab race, it is practically inevitable that he will find his arena for genocide, he will find his Kurds. Moreover, his theory of history will pardon him if he sets out to commit mass murder against lower races, such as Americans. The Baathist ideology demands a revolution in world affairs. The United States and its democracy must be humiliated and brought low so that the dominance of the Arab nation can achieve its final and fitting triumph, and so realize God's plan for the earth.

No leader, not even a highly ideological one like Saddam, is unfailingly guided by his belief system. Ideas are not everything. All leaders bide their time, looking for opportunities, looking out for themselves. But in the current argument over what do to about Iraq and Saddam, ideas have been treated as if they were nothing. The argument has been over weapons of mass destruction, unilateralism vs. multilateralism, and nuclear capabilities. Very little attention has been paid to what Saddam wants and what Saddam believes—which is like analyzing Hitler without reference to the ideology of the Nazi party or Lenin without reference to communism.

The CIA and the State Department might think otherwise, but we are not all game theorists. Human beings are not all rational actors carefully calculating their interests. Certain people—many people, in fact—are driven by goals, ideals, and beliefs. Saddam Hussein has taken such awful risks throughout his career not because he "miscalculated," as the game theorists assert, but because he was chasing his vision. He was following the dictates of the Baathist ideology, which calls for warfare, bloodshed, revolution, and conflict, on and on, against one and all, until the end of time. ♦



Michael Ramirez

THE FRENCH U.N. RESOLUTION ON IRAQ...

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Look Who Likes Deterrence Now

The Left's new love affair with containment

By Max Boot

In their eagerness to stop a U.S. invasion of Iraq, antiwar activists have adopted an interesting argument. Containment and deterrence worked against the Soviet Union, they say, and they will work against Saddam Hussein. *Now* they tell us. The Left's enthusiasm for containment and deterrence was, to put it mildly, a lot harder to detect during the Cold War. To hear born-again cold warriors tell it, everyone agreed in the old days on a get-tough approach to communism. If only.

In point of fact, the U.S. government adopted policies of deterrence and containment in the late 1940s, and kept them in place until 1991, over the vociferous objections of the Left both here and in Europe. It's worth a short trip down Memory Lane to provide some perspective on today's debate over Iraq.

Harry Truman first began drafting a get-tough approach against the Soviet Union in 1946. Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace, the liberal standard-bearer, argued instead for a policy of cooperating with Stalin, even advocating that we share the atomic secret with the Soviet dictator. Truman booted him out of the cabinet, but Wallace and his followers remained firmly opposed to the hard-line policies of the administration and its successors.

In 1958 Bertrand Russell and other peace activists organized the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, calling for unilateral British disarmament. Their Ban the Bomb movement spread across Western Europe, leading to regular protests and marches. In 1961, just after the Berlin Wall had gone up, Russell got himself arrested trying to block the deployment of the first U.S. Polaris submarine to a base in Scotland.

Every major deployment of U.S. weapons systems thereafter prompted protests, many of which make today's anti-American rallies seem tame by comparison. In the late 1970s, NATO decided it had to counter Soviet medium-range SS-20 missiles by fielding Pershing II and cruise missiles in Europe. As the deployment drew near in 1983, millions of Europeans, many wearing ghoulish costumes, took to the streets to protest. In England, which was due to receive the first cruise missiles, protesters pelted the defense minister with eggs and sprayed him with red paint.

Many moderate liberals, including German chancellor Helmut Schmidt, supported the deployment, but nevertheless argued that the primary Western approach should be not to confront the Soviets militarily, but to negotiate arms-reduction agreements with them. Implementing "détente," the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations negotiated ambitious arms control accords with the Soviet Union, notably SALT I and SALT II. The Soviet Union, however, saw détente as an opportunity to build a nuclear missile force capable of carrying out a first strike against the United States. Meanwhile, attempts to strengthen America's nuclear deterrent, by building B-1 bombers or MX missiles, were either blocked or scaled back by Democrats in Congress.

But even this didn't go far enough for some people. Many on the left in the early 1980s, including Ronald Reagan's own daughter, Patti Davis, were beguiled by the prospect of a nuclear freeze, and damn the consequences. A June 1982 nuclear freeze rally in New York's Central Park drew some 700,000 participants, making it the largest political assembly in the nation's history. In West Germany 5 million people signed the Krefeld Appeal in favor of unilateral disarmament.

The mood of the time was summed up by two events in 1983. The first was the ABC movie *The Day After*, which

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depicted in graphic terms a nuclear attack against a small, Midwestern town, and ended with a stark message: "It is to be hoped that the images of this film will inspire the nations of this Earth, their people and leaders, to find the means to avert the fateful day." Suffice it to say, the producers did not hope to avert "the fateful day" by deterring Soviet aggression. Their worldview was shared by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, which earlier that year released a famous pastoral letter protesting the nuclear arms race.

"We see with increasing clarity," the bishops wrote, "the political folly of a system which threatens mutual suicide, the psychological damage this does to ordinary people, especially the young, the economic distortion of priorities—billions readily spent for destructive instruments while pitched battles are waged daily in our legislatures over much smaller amounts for the homeless, the hungry, and the helpless here and abroad." The bishops didn't rely on deterrence: "We cannot consider it adequate as a long-term basis for peace." Instead they urged "accelerated work for arms control reduction and disarmament" and "efforts to develop non-violent means of conflict resolution." This letter caused apoplexy among hard-line Reagan officials but was warmly greeted by Democrats, many of whom endorsed the nuclear freeze movement and accused Reagan of being a warmonger.

The only reason that deterrence and containment were sound policies to pursue against the Soviet Union is that there was no good alternative. Our nuclear arsenal may have deterred them, but theirs also deterred us.

The only time the Left showed any enthusiasm for deterrence was in bashing "Star Wars," as they dubbed the Strategic Defense Initiative unveiled by Ronald Reagan in 1983. After years of protesting deterrence and ridiculing its architects as crazed warmongers (see, for example, *Dr. Strangelove*), liberals suddenly sounded like Herman Kahn disciples as they preached the virtues of Mutual Assured Destruction. This wasn't a fundamental shift in thinking, however. They praised MAD in order to protest Star Wars, but argued against deterrence in general by advocating a nuclear freeze and a "no first use" policy on nuclear weapons. The Left's stance in the Star Wars debate should therefore be seen as a politically convenient, if not terribly sincere, embrace of an ideology they loathed in order to defeat something they hated even more—Ronald Reagan and his "peace through strength" philosophy.

Containment was even less popular on the left than deterrence. "Containment" is depicted these days as a passive doctrine of peace, as opposed to the warmongering of "preemption" advocates. The reality was a good deal more sordid. What did containment entail? It meant support for the Greek colonels, the Argentine generals, the shah, Pinochet, Marcos, Somoza, and other unsavory characters who were in "our" camp. It meant helping to overthrow rulers, such as Mossadegh in Iran, Arbenz in Guatemala, and Allende in Chile, who were seen as drifting toward the other side. It meant major wars against North Korea and North Vietnam. It meant invasions of the Dominican Republic and Grenada. It meant support for anti-Communist guerrillas in places like Cuba (the Bay of Pigs), Angola, Nicaragua, and Afghanistan.

The Left still brandishes many of these episodes as evidence that America has been guilty of immoral and even illegal conduct. Indeed Christopher Hitchens is now leading an effort to indict Henry Kissinger for, essentially, the crime of practicing containment a little too vigorously. This might be Hitchens's last area of agreement with his old comrades.

So forgive me if I question the Left's sincerity in advocating containment and deterrence for dealing with Iraq. Actually I have more sympathy with their old arguments during the Cold War. They were right to criticize many aspects of deterrence and containment as immoral and dangerous. The cost of the Cold War *was* high. More than 100,000 American soldiers died fighting communism. American taxpayers spent countless billions of dollars on defense. And, worst of all, the world was repeatedly brought to the brink of annihilation. The closest call came during the Cuban Missile Crisis, whose 40th anniversary we marked last month. But there were other moments of extreme danger. One occurred in 1973, during the Yom Kippur War, when the United States went to DefCon 3 in order to deter the Soviet Union from intervening against Israel. Another occurred in 1983, during NATO's Able Archer war games in Europe, which some in the Kremlin misinterpreted as the prelude to a first strike against the Soviet Union.

The world was right to breathe a sigh of relief in 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed with a whimper, not a bang. Yet now activists who claim to be "antiwar" are advocating that we undertake another prolonged bout of nuclear brinksmanship against Saddam Hussein. What's wrong with this picture?

The only reason that deterrence and containment were worthwhile policies to pursue against the Soviet Union is

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that there was no good alternative. In the 1952 election, Dwight Eisenhower and other Republicans criticized the Truman Doctrine and promised to replace containment with "rollback." But once in office, they didn't deliver. When Soviet troops crushed uprisings for freedom in East Germany in 1953 and in Hungary in 1956, the United States stood by and essentially did nothing. There was a good reason for American inaction: Our nuclear arsenal may have deterred the Soviet Union, but its nuclear arsenal also deterred us. Eisenhower was unwilling to risk nuclear war to liberate Eastern Europe.

The Soviets understood the value of deterrence. They never directly attacked the United States or its closest allies in Western Europe, but everything else was fair game. The Soviets trapped the people of Eastern Europe in a giant prison, and built a wall across Berlin to keep them from escaping. They invaded Afghanistan. They backed allies who took over China, Vietnam, Cuba, Angola, and numerous other countries. They supported the Baader Meinhof Gang, Red Army Faction, Irish Republican Army, Palestine Liberation Organization, and numerous other groups that terrorized Western Europe and the Middle East during the 1970s and '80s. The Soviets committed numerous outrages, from sponsoring, through their Bulgarian proxies, an assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II in 1981 to shooting down KAL flight 007 in 1983. The West could do little more than sputter in outrage. After all, what concrete steps could one take against a nation that deployed thousands of nuclear-tipped ICBMs?

It took more than 40 years of containment before the Soviet Union collapsed, and even then it happened only after Ronald Reagan ratcheted up the pressure in numerous ways still criticized by many for being too bellicose.

The United States today faces a similarly grim logic when it comes to dealing with North Korea. Now that Kim Jong Il has let it be known that he has nukes and even "worse weapons," everyone is treading warily around his Stalinist regime. We dare not preemptively attack North Korea, goes the logic, because it would be too dangerous to do so. Yet critics of the Bush administration seem sanguine about the possibility of Saddam acquiring nuclear weapons. We'll be able to deter him, they confidently assert. Perhaps, but, like the Soviet Union of old, he'll also deter us. Given his past record of aggression, it is not reassuring to think of what he might do if the United States were afraid to intervene against him. If Saddam acquired nuclear weapons and invaded Kuwait again, would today's antiwar activists really support a massive American response? If not, a policy of "deterrence" is meaningless.

The Left's position on containment of Iraq is equally incoherent. Critics denounce the sanctions imposed on Iraq by the United Nations, arguing that they have led to great misery for the Iraqi people. A fair point. But keep in mind that sanctions are the cornerstone of containment. The choice today is between sanctions and war; no one to the right of Ramsey Clark seriously advocates not fighting Saddam *and* lifting all outside controls on Iraq. Sanctions will end only if a new, more humane regime takes power in Baghdad. If Saddam stays in power (as he likely will, absent U.S. intervention), we will continue the containment policies of the past 11 years, which haven't proven any easier to implement than during the Cold War.

As part of this policy, the U.S. Air Force has to make a significant, costly commitment to patrol the no-fly zones of Northern and Southern Iraq, where its pilots face constant sniping from Iraqi air defenses. The U.S. armed forces have to base substantial numbers of troops on Iraq's borders, where they have caused much resentment, and where they have not infrequently become the targets of terrorist attack (the shooting at the Marines in Kuwait last month, the bombing of the USS *Cole* in 2000, the bombing of the Khobar Towers in 1996). Despite all this activity designed to pen him in, Saddam has flouted the terms of the U.N.'s oil-for-food program, using oil money to build up his arsenal of weapons of mass murder, while letting his people starve. And he appears to be as firmly entrenched in power as ever—hardly a glowing testimonial to the efficacy of "containment." But this should be no surprise, considering that it took more than 40 years of containment before the Soviet Union collapsed, and that occurred only after Ronald Reagan ratcheted up the pressure in numerous ways that are still criticized by many commentators for being too bellicose.

Luckily we don't have to stick with a passive policy in Iraq. The only reason the United States chose deterrence and containment during the Cold War was that the Soviet Union was too powerful to be preempted or rolled back. Well, Saddam isn't too powerful—yet. But he may become so in a few years' time, if he acquires nuclear weapons. At that point any attempt to stop him would result in a sequel to the Cuban Missile Crisis, with no guarantee of another happy ending. Surely, that would be carrying the Left's Cold War nostalgia too far. ♦

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But, mercifully, God's frozen people are thawing out. Where's the fire and dynamism in the Church today? Among traditional Catholics! The dioceses that have no vocations shortage, the religious orders that are growing, and the seminaries that are packed are predominantly the traditional ones. And traditional Catholics have been founding *new* colleges and seminaries. Polls show that the Catholics most committed to the Church are traditional Catholics. Seminarians and younger priests are much more traditional than middle-aged and older priests. The only novel idea in Catholic education is home-schooling, spearheaded by traditional Catholics. The only massive grassroots movement in the Church is the prolife movement, led by traditional Catholics. The only significant Catholic presence on TV is the ardently traditional EWTN. The only significant Catholic voice on radio is that of traditional Catholics.

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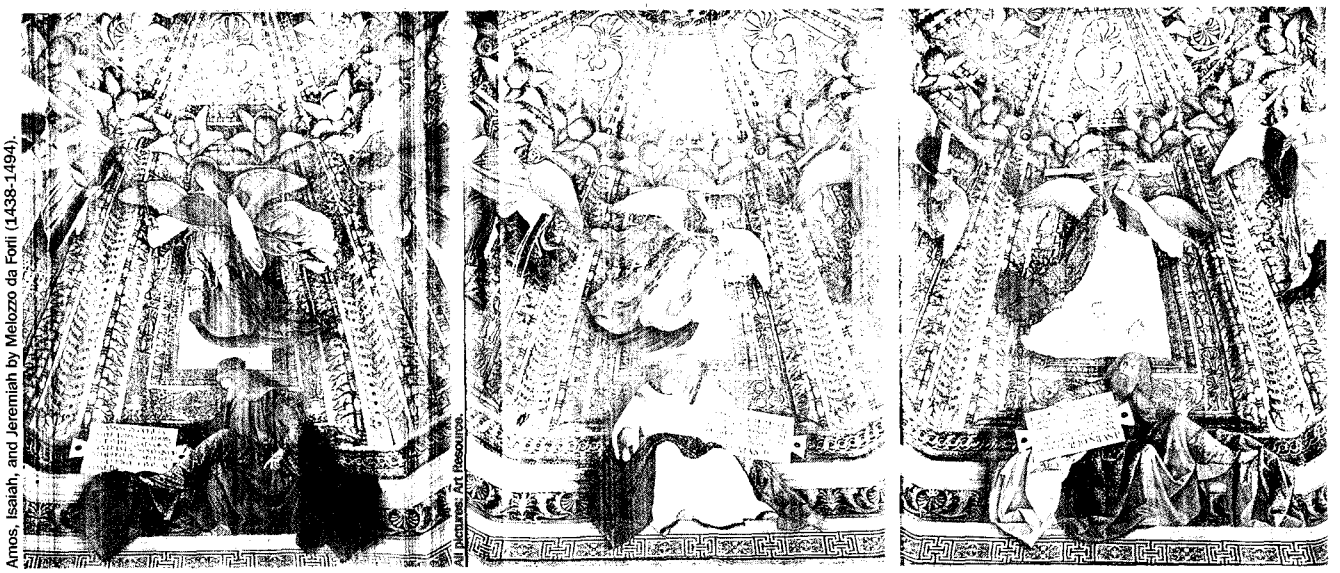

Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah by Melozzo da Forlì (1438-1494). All pictures: Art Resource.

Prophets with Honor

Norman Podhoretz's illuminating reading of the Bible

By Gary A. Anderson

One fall day, while I was in San Francisco, a friend took me to his favorite spot of pilgrimage—the memorial to Martin Luther King Jr. The design is impressive. A narrow path leads past a wall filled with quotations from the writings of Dr. King, while the visitor hears the crushing sound of water cascading to the ground on the other side of the path.

As we walked, I read the various quotations from King. Many sound contemporary, concerned with social justice, the over-reliance on technology and science, and so forth. And yet, as my secular friend's enthusiasm soared, mine flagged.

The Reverend King had the impact he did partly because of his theological convictions. Yet this monument depicted his achievements in secular tones. Even this was not without irony. Many times I had to ask my friend to repeat what he was saying. The crashing thunder of the waterfall was so loud that it was difficult to hear.

But behind that sound, I could sense the legacy of the prophet Amos and one of King's favorite lines: "Let justice roll like the waters, and righteousness like an unfailing stream." Though this biblical text, inscribed on the monument, informed the design of the waterfall, no citation of the prophet's name or King's biblical inspiration was to be found. Liberal secularism had risen up and erased the sense of religious truth.

It may be a similar experience that prompted Norman Podhoretz to write *The Prophets: Who They Were; What They Are*. In this powerful rereading of Israel's prophetic legacy, Podhoretz attempts to set the record straight about Israel's prophets. Liberals have long claimed that they alone bear the mantle of these courageous warriors from the biblical past; Podhoretz will have none of it. The prophets, in his reading, are not to be reduced to a "liberalogical" construal. Rather, they are to be understood as highly committed *religious* persons who were "fighting with all their might against idolatry in order to keep their people faithful to God because they believed with all their hearts and all their souls that He had, out of an inscrutable love, chosen the children of Israel as the instrument through which His Law would be revealed and ultimately accepted by every other people as well."

The Prophets
Who They Were; What They Are
by Norman Podhoretz
Free Press, 400 pp., $30

Podhoretz's corrective is useful, precisely because the religious sense has been lost on an entire generation of Bible readers. For those reared in the wake of the cultural turbulence of the late 1960s, the writings of the prophets are best known as a weapon brandished by various activists seeking to overturn assorted injustices. Common to most of these usages is the absence of any consideration of the particular religious framework from which the prophets sprang.

Consider the harshly critical words of Amos directed to the northern Kingdom of Israel in the mid-eighth century B.C.:

Thus saith the Lord:
For three transgressions of Israel, and for four,
I will not turn away the punishment thereof;
because they sold the righteous for silver,
and the poor for a pair of shoes;
That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor,
and turn aside the way of the meek:
and a man and his father will go in unto the same maid,
to profane my holy name;
And they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar,
and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god.

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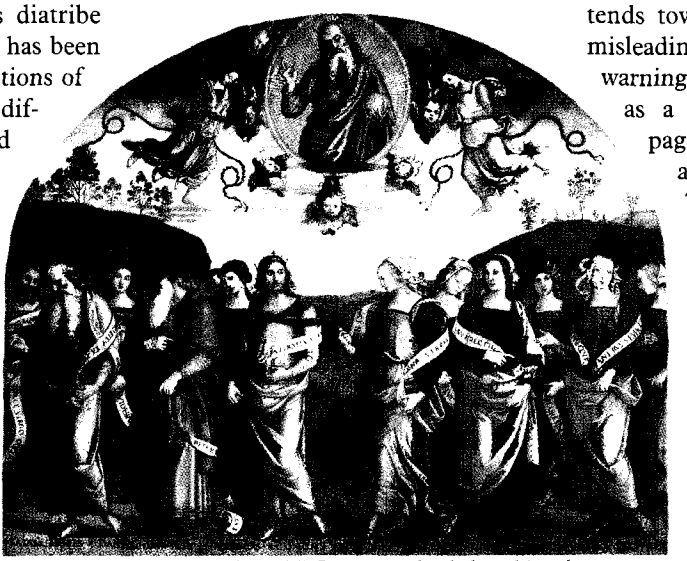
This ringing piece of social criticism does not spring fully formed from the tip of Amos' caustic pen. Rather, as Podhoretz illustrates, much of it is drawn from the specific covenantal norms of Mosaic law. Moreover, besides striking parallelism between the demands of the Law and the words of the prophet, the diatribe weaves together the ritual and moral violations of the chosen people. If there is some fundamental difference between ritual and morality, the prophet does not seem to know it. Without the religious tenor, there is no prophetic critique of social injustice.

This point, which might seem rather obvious, has not always been granted. Some commentators have taken notice that this diatribe against Israel (Amos 2:6-16) has been set up by a list of condemnations of Israel's neighbors (some six different nations are condemned for various crimes in the first chapter). This inclusion of non-Israelites among those who stand under the righteous judgment of God shows, in the words of one such interpreter, "the ethical and theological impartiality of the prophetic word in Amos." But Podhoretz recognizes that this softhearted turn to a more universalist reading is, in truth, soft-headed. He rebuts the claim decisively: "What the prophet is implying when he starts with the non-Israelites before turning to his own people is that, bad as the surrounding nations are, the children of Israel—both North and South—are worse *precisely* because they were chosen by Him to obey His law and His commandments and have failed to do so."

One of the benefits of having an intelligent lay reader like Podhoretz write an introduction to the Israelite prophets is that one does not get bogged down in the often-insufferable and often-insoluble questions that are the staple of biblical scholars. Podhoretz has read widely and intelligently in this genre, having begun his study while an undergraduate at Columbia and the Jewish Theological Seminary some decades ago. His translation of this enormous body of scholarly literature into more everyday language is, on the whole, dependable.

One significant omission, though, is a systematic consideration of the prophet as intercessor. The prophet not only delivered harsh messages to Israel but was also *required* to voice misgivings about some of the judgments of the Holy One of Israel! In *Love and Joy*, Yochanan Muffs of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America has written most engagingly and profoundly on this often neglected part of the prophet's job description. It seems that God demanded that the prophet stand toe to toe against him to argue that Israel be shown mercy. It was in the interplay between prophet and Deity that the true depth of the nature of God was given expression.



Pietro Perugino (1438-1494), Lunette with Sibyls and Prophets.

Podhoretz's occasional discussions of why Christological readings of the prophets fail are also problematic. Such Christian readings turn, he asserts, on whether texts such as Isaiah's "a virgin shall conceive" are to be understood as literal predictions of Jesus Christ. Podhoretz rightly notes that it is very difficult to square such a claim with modern Hebrew lexicography, in which "virgin" is more aptly rendered, "a young, marriageable girl." Yet few commentators would claim that a Christian reading of Isaiah stands or falls on the translation of this verse. (The interested reader might look at Christopher Seitz's outstanding essay, "Isaiah in New Testament, Lectionary, Pulpit," in *Word Without End*, for an alternative view.)

More of a problem is Podhoretz's move to equate the prophetic attack on idolatry with the contemporary antinomianism that is so much the rage among the Western academic elite. Although I agree with most of Podhoretz's assessment of the moral and cultural devastation wrought by these antinomian trends, his move to align the perpetrators of deconstruction and other forms of moral nihilism with the paganizing opponents of Israel's God tends toward the simplistic and the misleading. He quotes Jon Levenson's warning that "using the Hebrew Bible as a source for learning about paganism is like trying to learn about Judaism from the New Testament, where the parent religion is comparably misrepresented by polemical zeal." But this does not prevent Podhoretz from doing exactly this just eight pages later. His description of Canaanite paganism (which in its sanctioning of sexual promiscuity and disregard for the well-being of its children shows considerable overlap with contemporary antinomianism) is no truer to Canaanite religion than is the Gospel writers' account of the Pharisees to Jewish thought in the first century A.D. His diatribe against modern nihilistic trends is instructive in its own right, but Podhoretz doesn't quite find an adequate *interpretive* foundation to root it in the legacy of the biblical prophets.

Nonetheless, *The Prophets* is an elegant and well-written survey of Israel's prophetic heritage. The reader can find a myriad of recent books on the prophets that have emerged from the desks of biblical scholars, but few of them will have the sort of passionate, contemporary engagement that marks Norman Podhoretz's work. ♦

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Homegrown Terrorist

Debunking the romance of Jesse James.

BY BILL CROKE

Long biographies of short lives must seek subjects who did a whole lot of living in their brief spans. In *Jesse James: Last Rebel of the Civil War*, T.J. Stiles uses Jesse James's bloodsoaked thirty-four years as an occasion to construct a primer on the Civil War and Reconstruction—a time in which, if they'd had the phrase "The Politics of Personal Destruction," it would have been applied literally.

Jesse James has come down to us cloaked in romantic myth, thanks to nineteenth-century hagiography and twentieth-century Hollywood. *Jesse James*, a 1939 classic film starring Tyrone Power and Henry Fonda, presented the outlaw as a rebel Robin Hood avenging wrongs perpetrated by the Yankees and the railroad. Last year's minor movie *American Outlaws* continued the theme. But the truth is much worse: Jesse James was a charismatic and vicious sociopath, a young man enamored of violence and a megalomaniac who craved fame.

Born in 1847 to Robert Sallee James (a Baptist minister who died young) and Zerelda Cole James (a woman whose steely toughness and southern sympathies were the equal of her outlaw sons'), Jesse Woodson James was an adolescent at the start of the Civil War that caused his native Missouri so much heartbreak. The border states were sharply divided on the national slavery question. The James brothers came from a family of minor slaveholders (the widowed Zerelda having remarried a doctor named Reuben Samuels) who deeply resented the prospect of freeing those few slaves who worked the small farm that Zerelda ruled with an iron fist. Jesse's older brother Frank enlisted in the Confederate army in 1861 to serve with the infamous guerrilla fighter William Quantrill, and by the war's end a sixteen-year-old Jesse was an active participant.

All pictures: Knopf.

Jesse James
Last Rebel of the Civil War
by T.J. Stiles
Knopf, 491 pp., $27.50

A string of central counties in Missouri, originally settled by slaveholding Kentuckians, supported the southern cause and produced a breed of guerrillas known as "bushwhackers" (for their expertise at ambush). They raided their Union-sympathizing neighbors, shooting down farmers in their fields and spreading murder and arson westward into Kansas. As Stiles writes, "Missouri's war was small scale, intensely personal, and intensely vicious." Lee's surrender at Appomattox meant nothing in Missouri, as the violence continued and the state became a hotbed for the nascent Ku Klux Klan.

Moving across this anarchic landscape was the teenage Jesse James, an apprentice among masters—particularly William "Bloody Bill" Anderson, with whom James rode for a year. Anderson made "a moveable kingdom of terror." A serial rapist who preyed particularly on black women, he killed for pleasure and was directly responsible for the murder of more than two dozen Union soldiers—veterans of Sherman's Georgia campaign—taken off a train near Centralia, Missouri, in 1864.

Another of James's mentors was Archie Clement, so diabolically formidable that even among Anderson's men he was thought to be too violent, earning the sobriquet of "Bill Anderson's Scalper." Both Anderson and Clement died in the battles of the time. James himself was shot through the lung, a wound that enhanced his reputation as one of the few prominent bushwhackers to survive the battles with Union troops.

After the war, the James brothers first set themselves to settle old scores, but they soon took the practical view that banks and other "Unionist" businesses were the enemy—and lucrative targets that would finance their ongoing partisan terrorism. They also came to see the railroads as the ultimate threat to the rapidly evaporating antebellum way of life. The trains meant commerce and an influx of new settlers, and eventually a Missouri more northern than southern.

The James brothers can be credited with two firsts in the annals of American crime. They were the first bandits to perform an armed robbery of a bank in the daytime, and they were the first to rob an entire train. The former occurred in Liberty, Missouri, on February 13, 1866, and netted the nine participants $58,000. The train robbery was along the tracks of the Rock Island Railroad near Des Moines, Iowa, on July 21, 1873. Never before had a gang stopped a train, boarded it, and methodically robbed it and its passengers. Trains were attractive because express companies such as Wells Fargo

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used them to ship large amounts of cash.

Sometimes the brothers robbed simply to put on a brazen show. They once held up a stagecoach near Lexington, Missouri, while hundreds of citizens watched from a hill above. It was this hubris that would eventually bring about their downfall. They were publicity hounds who loved to read about themselves in the newspapers. The Democratic papers in Missouri treated them like heroes and trumpeted their exploits. They even had their own unofficial press agent in the person of John N. Edwards, an ex-Confederate officer who wrote for the Kansas City *Times*. Edwards's laudatory pieces included one with the fawning title of "The Chivalry of Crime," where he celebrated the James brothers' daring feats "of stupendous nerve and fearlessness" and portrayed the criminals as the political saviors of the old Missouri. Jesse himself was the author of many boasting letters to editors.

One of the aspects of Jesse James's criminal genius was his uncanny ability to elude capture. By the time authorities arrived, he was usually long gone. This was a holdover from his bushwhacker days of traveling at night and riding long distances up streams to erase any trail. And he was known and admired for always having a fast horse.

He was also known—but not admired—by the Pinkerton Agency. Allan Pinkerton was a transplanted Scotsman and nineteenth-century J. Edgar Hoover. From his headquarters in Chicago, he dispatched his agents to outlaw hotspots around the country. Pinkerton was especially obsessed with Jesse James, because the outlaw through his bushwhacker contacts had managed to have murdered three of Pinkerton's finest, notably a prized agent named Joseph Whicher.

Pinkerton agents made a clumsy attempt to capture the James brothers and avenge those deaths by bombing Zerelda Samuels's house on a cold January night in 1875. It turns out that no gang members were present (although they had been there earlier in the evening). The fire resulted in a small portion of the house's being burned, serious injuries to Zerelda, Reuben, and a paid black servant named Ambrose, and the death of eight-year-old Archie Samuels, Jesse and Frank's half brother. Jesse swore personal revenge (never performed) on Allan Pinkerton for the atrocity, and the Missouri press made martyrs of the James Gang, spurring them on to more criminality.

An 1872 engraving based on Order Number Eleven *by George Caleb Bingham.*

From 1866 to 1876, they regularly robbed banks and trains across the border region, from West Virginia to Kansas. Their most notorious raid was on the First National Bank of Northfield, Minnesota, on September 7, 1876, and it is a case study in Jesse James's megalomania. The Northfield adventure was, like much else James did, politically motivated. An inveterate reader of newspapers, James discovered that a man named Adelbert Ames—a decorated Union veteran and ex-Reconstruction governor of Mississippi—had moved to Northfield, Minnesota, invested in business there, and deposited $75,000 in the First National Bank.

Though James was a staple in the Missouri papers, the national press had been ignoring him for some while, in favor of stories about the scandal-ridden Grant administration, the upcoming presidential election, and George Custer's unpleasant collision with destiny on the Little Bighorn. So James decided to rob the bank and kill the much-despised Ames. His huge ego also saw this as a small-scale invasion of the north, likening it to Robert E. Lee's 1863 expedition to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Jesse James was still fighting the Civil War ten years after the fact.

Northfield was a disaster. Unlike the citizens of Missouri, the Minnesotans fought back. The gang was hampered by uncooperative bank tellers, and, as word spread that the bank was being robbed, townspeople began shooting at them from sidewalks and storefront windows. Two gang members immediately fell dead (Clell Miller and William Chadwell; Charlie Pitts would die in the coming days). The three Younger brothers, Cole, Bob, and Jim, rode up and down the street returning fire as they attempted to provide cover for their comrades. All three were wounded and captured within days. A teller was killed, and the robbers left empty-handed, Jesse and Frank riding for their lives. Ames was nearby but emerged unscathed.

The James brothers—now the object of a national manhunt—disappeared into Tennessee under assumed names. Jesse, with his wife Zee, rented a farm near Nashville as "John Davis Howard." Frank did likewise as "B.J. Woodson," installing his family on a farm where he put in long days, as he resolved to leave his old life behind.

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But Jesse soon slipped off to Missouri to resume his criminal ways, now with new associates. Two of them, Charley and Bob Ford, would be his undoing.

In a scene made famous in movies and popular culture, Jesse James was shot in Independence, Missouri, on April 3, 1882—shot in the back of the head by Bob Ford as he stood on a stool dusting a picture of his Tennessee home. Ford was in the employ of Missouri's new governor, Thomas Crittenden. Ford himself was murdered in Colorado in 1892.

The heat was on Frank, and he soon surrendered to Crittenden in a legendary encounter, telling him: "Governor, I am Frank James. I surrender my arms to you. . . . They have not been out of my possession since 1864." Two trials failed to convict him. Unlike his brother, he had kept a low profile during their larcenous careers, and this quiet humility served him well in the end. In 1885, a new governor, John S. Marmaduke, an ex-Confederate, pardoned him, and instructed him to return to his farm and avoid "fairs and fast horses, and to keep strictly out of sight for a year." Marmaduke also refused to extradite him to Minnesota to stand trial for the Northfield raid. Other than a short incarceration upon surrendering, Frank James never spent a day in jail.

The Youngers did. Bob died of tuberculosis in a Minnesota prison in 1889. Jim committed suicide in 1902. Cole was paroled in 1901 and pardoned in 1903, whereupon he was allowed to return to Missouri. He immediately hooked up with Frank with the idea of exploiting their colorful pasts. Hiring actors to play themselves, they produced a show called "The Great Cole Younger and Frank James Historical Wild West," the two aging gunslingers content to let their lifelong tragedies dissolve into farce. It is the saddest and truest commentary on those Missouri terrorists. For twenty years they killed and burned their way across the border states to build nothing, to accomplish nothing, and to gain nothing—except a notoriety sufficient to mount a minor wild-west show for the amusement of eastern city dwellers. Sometimes American history is almost unbearable. ♦

The Beerbohm Cult

Why Max Beerbohm is the world's greatest minor writer. **BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN**

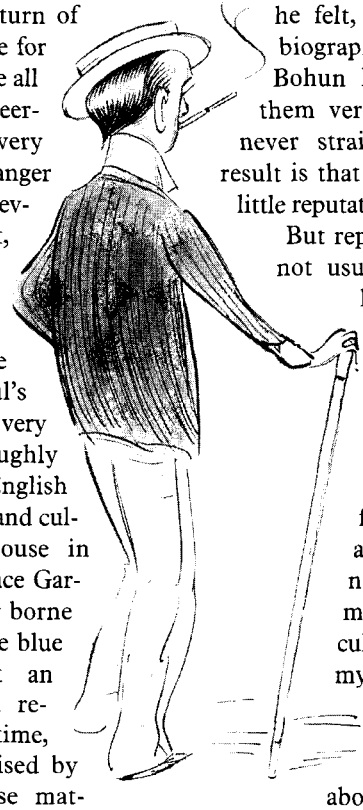
Lovers—no lesser word will do—of the prose, caricatures, and mind of Max Beerbohm constitute a cult. Membership in the cult requires a strong penchant for irony, a skeptical turn of mind, and a sharp taste for comic incongruity. Like all impressive cults, the Beerbohm cult is small, very small, and always in danger of guttering out—but never, I'm happy to report, quite doing so.

When Max Beerbohm died, in his eighty-fourth year, he was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral, along with a very select company of roughly three hundred other English heroes of war, politics, and culture. His family's house in Kensington, at 57 Palace Gardens Terrace, has long borne one of those periwinkle blue plaques noting that an important figure had resided there. In his lifetime, he was knighted, praised by everyone whose praise mattered (T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Evelyn Waugh, E.M. Forster, Edmund Wilson, and W.H. Auden, among others, weighed in), and was widely respected if not revered by people of literary sensibility.

Still, he was always what Arnold Bennett called a "small-public" writer. Beerbohm, even when alive, thought he had a readership of no more than fifteen hundred in England and another thousand in America. He had no delusions about the breadth of his appeal. His "gifts were small," he felt, and he told his first biographer, a man named Bohun Lynch, that he "used them very well and discreetly, never straining them; and the result is that I've made a charming little reputation."

But reputations for charm do not usually long survive the lives of those who exhibit them, however well and discreetly.

Something more than charm has kept the small if scarcely gem-like Beerbohmian flame alive. I am myself, as you will perhaps by now have gathered, a member of the Beerbohm cult. Ten or so feet behind my back, three of his caricatures (of Byron, Matthew Arnold, and Dante) hang above a bookcase. A picture of Max Beerbohm is on a wall roughly six feet from where I am now writing about him. The photograph shows an elderly man—born in 1872, he lived until 1956—sitting on a cane chair on the terrace of his small villa in Rapallo. Ever the dandy, he is wearing a boater at a jaunty angle, a light-colored and slightly rumpled suit, a white waistcoat and dark tie with a collar pin. His left leg is crossed over his right. His head and hands seem rather large for his



Max Beerbohm
A kind of a life
by N. John Hall
Yale University Press, 284 pp., $24.95

Joseph Epstein is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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All pictures: Yale University Press.

Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas.

body. His hooded eyes peer out of deep sockets, his thick white mustache does not droop. His countenance, slightly dour like that of so many great comedians, is that of a man on whom, right up to the end of life, not much has been lost.

I first began reading Max Beerbohm the year before his death. Of all the comic reputations of that day—S.J. Perelman, James Thurber, Frank Sullivan—his is the only one, nearly fifty years later, whose comedy holds up for me. The combination of common sense and whimsy that were his special literary blend continues to work its magic. All is presented in a calm and unfaltering style of what I think of as formal intimacy; if he ever wrote a flawed sentence, I have not come across it. "To be outmoded is to be a classic," he once said of himself, "if one has written well." His economy of formulation touched on genius. Asked by the playwright S.N. Behrman what he thought of Freudianism, he replied: "A tense and peculiar family, the Oedipuses, were they not?" Ten perfectly aimed words and—poof!—a large and highly fallacious school of thought crumples to dust.

I have been referring to him as Beerbohm or Max Beerbohm, but members of the cult tend to refer to him as "Max" merely, which is how he signed his caricatures. The cult itself sometimes goes by the name "Maximilians." George Bernard Shaw, when turning over the job of drama critic on the English *Saturday Review*, said he was making way for "the incomparable Max." (Tired of the sobriquet, Beerbohm more than once implored, "Compare me, compare me.") Something of the intimacy of his style seems to make calling him "Max" rather less objectionable than, say, calling Shakespeare "William," or Joyce "Jim." Yet I find I cannot quite bring myself to do it.

In his two books on Beerbohm, N. John Hall calls him Max, but I should say that Hall has earned the right to do so, having served him so sedulously. Five years ago, Hall published a beautiful and impeccably edited collection entitled *Max Beerbohm Caricatures*, to which he supplied a fine and splendidly informative accompanying text. In that work, Professor Hall (tempted though I am, I shall refrain from calling him "N.") displayed a wide knowledge of Beerbohm and his milieu and a depth of sympathy for the large comic enterprise that are his caricatures. He produced a book in every way worthy of its subject: modest, elegant, charming, and useful—a keeper, as fishermen like to say.

Now Hall is back with a prose work that he has chosen to call *Max Beerbohm: A kind of a life*. As it happens, *A kind of a life* turns out to be *A Sort of a Biography*—a rare and unusual sort. There have been other Beerbohm biographies, the most complete of which is that written by the English man of letters David Cecil; and there have been various studies, none of them silly or obtuse: To be drawn to Beerbohm as a subject almost automatically insures one against pomposity, humorlessness, or academic pretentiousness. Yet for all that has been written about Max Beerbohm, no one has come close to capturing the extraordinary personality behind his small but remarkable creations both in prose and with pencil. Professor Hall comes near to suggesting that there is nothing really that needs to be captured.

Biography, ideally, operates at three depths: The biographer shows how a man appears to his public, how he appears to his friends and family, and how he appears to himself. Hall's biography touches on all three, none in smothering detail, though he is stronger on the first two than the third. His book is not meant to be exhaustive or in any way definitive, and in some ways it is all the more pleasing for its modesty of intentions. "I shall keep this book relatively short," he writes, "and I shall not attempt to ferret out the inner man. The 'inner man of Max Beerbohm' sounds oxymoronic. He was very self-aware, but he was not given to introspection or soul-searching. If he did look deeply into himself—and I don't believe he did so very often—he did not tell us about it."

What this leaves Hall in his biography is a review of Max Beerbohm's career, an appreciative yet critical sorting out of his various works, and a consideration of the main unresolved questions about his remarkably quiet life. Drawing on other biographies, his book is a vade mecum of Beerbohmian information. Our biographer is immensely companionable, admitting his ignorance when it arises and deciding that many things really are not worth going into. He will provide an interpretation for, or offer a possible motive behind, a work and

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then blithely add, "I may be wrong," or "But these are merely biographer's fancies." For those of us who do not quite believe in biographical truth, but are much more impressed by (in W.H. Auden's phrase) "the baffle of being," such casualness, far from seeming quirky, is instead rather refreshing and even admirable.

When critical, Hall often levels his criticisms in an amusingly oblique way that his subject would probably have much approved. Of the small number of fairy tales Beerbohm wrote, Hall suggests: "These three stories may be easily avoided by even the most devoted of Maximilians, if only they will try." The ironic tone of that sentence is reminiscent of Beerbohm himself once writing that, apropos of the need for historical background to write about the year 1880, "to give an accurate account of that period would need a far less brilliant pen than mine."

Hall's judgments of Beerbohm's works are quite sound. I know this is so because they agree with my own—always, of course, the best evidence for high intelligence in others. He thinks Beerbohm's single famous work, *Zuleika Dobson*—the novel about a beauty whose arrival at Oxford causes the death by suicide of all the university's undergraduates—rather overdone and therefore tending toward the monotonous, though even so he includes it among Beerbohm's best work. He thinks the early essays, written in the (Oscar) Wildean manner, more than a touch precious, and he believes the volumes of drama criticism suffer from having been written chiefly about second- and third-rate playwrights. He recognizes that Beerbohm tended to underrate Shaw—he had a real antipathy to geniuses, whom he thought "generally asinine"—and to overrate Lytton Strachey. The best of Beerbohm, Hall holds, includes Beerbohm's book of parodies, *A Christmas Garland*; his perfectly polished final collection of essays, *And Even Now*; and his book of short stories got up to read as if they were memoirs, *Seven Men and Two Others*.

Hall expends rather less space on Beerbohm's caricatures, having already devoted a lengthy book to the subject. He provides an excellent account of his subject's brief but brilliant performances over the BBC. But he reminds us that Beerbohm always found drawing easier than writing; and we know that, after he ceased to write for publication in his late thirties with his permanent move to Italy, he devoted himself almost wholly to the delicate and (in his hands) often devastating art of caricature. On this subject, in an early book on Beerbohm, John Felstiner, the biographer of Paul Celan (to have written books on Max Beerbohm and Paul Celan: talk about the comedy of incongruity) rightly says that "generally Beerbohm's caricatures tend to ridicule, while his judgments in writing are less direct—the rough distinction is between satire and irony." Felstiner goes on to say that his innovation as a caricaturist was in bringing "the dynamics of parody into caricature," and it is quite true that the captions to Beerbohm's drawings are often quite as brilliant as the draftsmanship.

Zuleika Dobson

Max Beerbohm tended to worry about the cruelty of his caricatures and claimed not to be able to explain it, since only in rare cases—Shaw, Kipling, a now-forgotten novelist named Hall Caine—did he feel a murderous impulse behind his work in this line. (He almost never drew women.) My own feeling is that, as with so many genuine artists, he had great powers of detachment: "I have a power of getting out of myself," he wrote. "This is a very useful power." Writing about Aubrey Beardsley, he noted the aloofness of many artists, which allows them to see "so much" and "the power to see things, unerringly, as they are." His own detachment allowed him a serene objectivity that easily spotted the pretensions and comic self-presentations of others. He was, in the phrase of Henry James, whom he much admired, "infinitely addicted to 'noticing.'" The result, issuing from the end of his pencil, was laughter, usually, in the nature of the case, at the subject's expense. Much as I would have loved to have known Max Beerbohm, I'm not sure that personal acquaintance with him would have been worth the pain of gazing upon his drawing of me.

Some years ago, before his late-life turn to Christianity, Malcolm Muggeridge, then still an exquisite troublemaker, wrote in the pages of the *New York Review of Books* that Max Beerbohm "was in panic flight through most of his life from two things—his Jewishness and his homosexuality." Always audacious and often utterly wrong, the old Mugger this time out missed on both counts.

On the first count, David Cecil writes that of the Beerbohm family "it has often been suggested that they were Jewish . . . ; and the notion gains color in Max's case from his brains, taste for bravura, and his propensity to fall in love with Jewesses." (He finally married one, an American actress named Florence Kahn.) Although Beerbohm claimed he rather wished he had Jewish blood, in fact the Beerbohm family was part Dutch, German, and English in origin. Asked by Shaw if he had any Jewish ancestors, Beerbohm replied: "That my talent is rather like Jewish tal-

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ent I admit readily. . . . But, being in fact a Gentile, I am, in a small way, rather remarkable, and wish to remain so."

"Jewish talent"—of what might it consist? I think for Max Beerbohm it had to do with his aloofness, his not-quite-fully belonging to any groups or coteries, and with his ironic approach to life. ("I wish, Ladies and Gentlemen," he said in one of his famous BBC broadcasts during World War II, "I could cure myself of the habit of speaking ironically. I should so like to express myself in a straightforward manner.") A woman friend said he "combined an accurate appreciation of worldly values with an ultimate indifference to them." Very Jewish, this, or at least a quality that often shows up in Jews. Finally, there was his essentially comic approach to life. Believing that "only the insane take themselves quite seriously," Beerbohm was primarily and always an ironist, a comedian, an amused observer standing on the sidelines with a smile and a glass of wine in his hand. G.K. Chesterton said of him that "he does not indulge in the base idolatry of believing in himself." Rather Jewish, much of this, too.

As for Muggeridge's second count, that Max Beerbohm was attempting to hide his homosexuality, here the evidence appears to be purely guilt by association. As a young man, he was on the periphery of the Oscar Wilde circle. (Wilde had a high opinion of Beerbohm, but it was not always returned—"he was never a real person in contact with realities," Beerbohm wrote—and some of his most brutal caricatures are of poor Wilde run to bestial fat.) Beerbohm's best friend, Reggie Turner (a novelist remembered now only for his quip that his rarest books were his second editions), was also homosexual. David Cecil writes that, "though he showed no moral disapproval of homosexuality, [Beerbohm] was not disposed to it himself; on the contrary he looked upon it as a great misfortune to be avoided if possible." Cecil quotes a letter from Beerbohm to Oscar Wilde's friend Robert Ross in which he asks Ross to keep Reggie Turner from the clutches of the creepy Lord Alfred Douglas: "I really think Reg is at a rather crucial point of his career—and should hate to see him fall an entire victim to the love that dare not tell its name."

David Cecil thought that Max Beerbohm was a man of "low vitality," and he was too much the gentleman to place the adjective "sexual" before the noun. The publisher Rupert Hart-Davis, an editor of Beerbohm's letters and a cataloguer of his caricatures, thought him asexual and his marriage to Florence Kahn a *mariage blanc*. Refereeing the dispute in *Max Beerbohm: A kind of a life*, N. John Hall says, at one point, that Beerbohm's private life doesn't matter—but then, later in the book, sides with Hart-Davis in thinking him asexual despite his marriage. A case cannot be made for Max Beerbohm as a notorious heterosexual, but I would like to weigh in with the fact that, in his essay "Laughter," he wrote that "only the emotion of love takes higher rank than the emotion of laughter." The sadness, of course, is that a case of any sort need be made at all.

Max Beerbohm

Max Beerbohm was the world's greatest minor writer, with the full oxymoronic quality behind that epithet entirely intended. He claimed to be without either envy or ambition, wanting only "to make good use of such little talents as I had, to lead a pleasant life, to do no harm, to pass muster." His tact was consummate; and one has never grown less tired of a man who wrote so much in the first person, for he knew the difference, as he once told his wife, between "offering himself humbly for the inspection of others" and pushing himself forward through egotism. He felt that a goodly portion of such success as he enjoyed was owing to his not having "tired people."

Asked to give the 1941 Clark Lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge, Beerbohm responded, "I have views on a number of subjects, but no coordinated body of views on any single subject. I have been rather a lightweight; and mature years have done nothing to remedy this."

I don't think he really believed it. What he believed was that "many charming talents have been spoiled by the instilled desire to do 'important' work! Some people are born to lift heavy weights. Some are born to juggle with golden balls."

He added that the latter were very much in the minority in England then, and, of course, now. But when haven't they been? The golden jugglers are the ones with wit, the ability to pierce pretension, and the calm detachment to mock large ideas and salvationist schemes. They eschew anger and love small perfections. They go in for handsome gestures (Beerbohm refused to accept a fee for speaking about his recently dead friend Desmond MacCarthy over the BBC), have wide sympathies, and understand that a complex point of view is worth more than any number of opinions.

Nothing lightweight about any of this—quite the reverse, I'd say. Had he met Isaac Newton, Beerbohm remarked, "I would have taught him the Law of Levity." It's a powerfully useful and important law, one that Max Beerbohm helped write and that must never, not ever, be allowed to go off the books. ♦

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Wahhabism Unveiled

Stephen Schwartz's *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud from Tradition to Terror* (Doubleday, 288 pp., $25) takes as its point of departure September 11 and the terrorist attacks on America. They were carried out, we now know, by nineteen Muslims who subscribed—like their leader, Osama bin Laden—to a radical strain of Islam known as Wahhabism. No writer has done more to expose Wahhabism than Stephen Schwartz, formerly of the Voice of America and now a fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies. (We are proud to add that much of that work was done originally in essays for THE WEEKLY STANDARD.)

Now, in *The Two Faces of Islam*, Schwartz expands his account at the greater length a book affords. He relates the life of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, born in 1703 in central Arabia. Wahhab "showed extremist religious tendencies" in his youth and in his thirties called fellow Arabs to his vision of an authentic Islam that (in violation of all previous understandings) required the submission of Muslims deemed to have departed from it. Indeed, killing such Muslims was now conceived as a religious duty.

Wahhab made an alliance with a local ruler in central Arabia by the name of Muhammad ibn Saud. Saud and his family weren't strict Muslims, but they had the arms necessary to support Wahhab's violent form of Islam. Together, Saud and Wahhab took control of much of Arabia, including Mecca and Medina. In the early nineteenth century the Ottomans constrained Wahhabism, but in 1901 a scion of the Saud family named Ibn Saud, impelled by Wahhabi ideology, murdered the ruler of Riyadh. Within a quarter century Ibn Saud had captured much of the Arabian peninsula. The founding of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia soon followed.

Thanks to great wealth deriving from its huge oil reserves, Saudi Arabia has been able to spread its state religion throughout the world—even to America. The kingdom is also, Schwartz fairly argues, complicit in September 11, since fifteen of the hijackers were Saudi citizens fed on Wahhabism and thus motivated to wield the sword against infidels. Bin Laden himself came from a wealthy Saudi family, his father a builder whose edifices include mosques in Mecca and Medina.

This book, however, is not just about Wahhabism. Schwartz observes that only a small percentage of Muslims are Wahhabis and that Wahhabism is at odds with traditional Islamic values. Islam thus has two faces: the menacing one of Wahhabism, and the attractive one of "mainstream Islam." Schwartz usefully explores this Islam, drawing on his own experiences in the Balkans.

Schwartz perhaps underplays the fact that Islam throughout its history has tended to see religion and politics as unified rather than distinct spheres. Even the appealing face of Islam may thus have in it something to be concerned about. The union of church and state, as we know from centuries of experience in the West, is not a compelling principle of political organization. On that fundamental matter, Islam is more than ripe for a reformation.

But Schwartz is obviously right to contend that the United States should cultivate mainstream Muslims as allies—which we cannot really do as long as we regard the Saudis as our best friends in the Muslim world. The urgency facing the United States, as Schwartz makes clear, is to challenge the Saudi regime to quit supporting theological extremism and terrorism.

—Terry Eastland

Editor's Note

A production error last week caused the final word of contributing editor Andrew Ferguson's review essay to disappear in the print version of the magazine. The last sentence should have read, "It is brave, wise, and doomed"—where the "it" refers to Leon Kass's project in his recent book, *Life, Liberty and the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics*. Entitled "Liberty, Equality, Dignity," Ferguson's complete essay can be found on THE WEEKLY STANDARD's website: *www.weeklystandard.com*. We apologize for the error.

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The Hotline
NATIONAL JOURNAL'S DAILY BRIEFING ON POLITICS

Also on
NationalJournal.com . . .

Friday, November 1, 2002

National Briefing

4 ARKANSAS: Getting Nasty

Mark Pryor launched "a sharply critical new television ad" 11/1 called "Beelzebub," claiming GOP rival **Tim Hutchinson** has formed secret pact with **Satan**. "The Devil, Satan, The Lord of Darkness. Doesn't this face look familiar?" declares voiceover as picture of Tim Hutchinson morphs into demon face with horns. "Tim Hutchinson—he's changed. A new chippie. New vitality. Endless campaign money. Where did it all come from? Makes you wonder. Satan's values are not Arkansas values. Vote Pryor."

Hutchinson counters with "Dead Puppy." Scene of Hutchinson kneeling on road next to canine corpse. "A few minutes ago Mark Pryor was driving down this road," voiceover announces. "He was speeding. Possibly drunk. He didn't care about the puppy strolling by. Didn't even bother to slow down." Close-up of Hutchinson holding puppy's head, tears streaming down face. "Tim Hutchinson cares about puppies. Vote Hutchinson."

5 NEW HAMPSHIRE: Distort and Dat Stort

John Sununu hits **Jeanne Shaheen**. Says she should be ashamed of "distorting my record." Was never member of Gestapo, he insists, nor did he meet **Joseph Mengele**. "I wasn't even born then," he declares. Shaheen refuses to retract, citing "doubts have been raised . . . the appearance of impropriety. . . ."

6 IN OTHER CAMPAIGNS:

Baucus campaign opens wide with "At Least I'm Not Gay" ad to hammer winning theme. Shows Baucus looking in fridge at six pack and old Chinese takeout box. . . . Tennessee candidates trade charges. **Alexander** launches "No, Yo Momma!" to counter **Clement** "Yo Momma" blitz. . . . In N. Carolina, **Bowles** shows off facelift, Viagra results in debate. . . . Meanwhile, ordinary Iraqis reconsider whole democracy thing.

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The American Literacy Tragedy

Paul E. Peterson is director of the Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University; senior fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

At science and math, American students trail those in other advanced democracies. The longer students are in school, the worse things get. Among fourth graders, U.S. students rank high on the International Test of Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Despite this head start, by eighth grade, American adolescents have slipped to the midpoint on the TIMSS, and, by age seventeen, their scores trail all but those in a few developing countries.

Perhaps this is "just" math and science, something American schools have never been good at. Besides, apologists say, Asian students (who score at the top on the TIMSS) are inexplicable math and science geniuses.

Yet low performance is not limited to these more challenging subjects. **Americans barely reach the international literacy average set by advanced democracies**, according to a report issued by the Educational Testing Service after looking at the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). Unlike the math and science surveys, the IALS was given to a cross section of adults aged 16 to 65. Despite the high expenditures on education in the United States—and the large numbers of students enrolled in colleges and universities—the United States ranked 12th on the test.

The United States is living on its past. Among the oldest group in the study (those aged 56–65), U.S. prose skills rose to second place. For those attending school in the 1950s, SAT scores reached an all-time high.

As the years go by, the United States slips down the list. Americans educated in the sixties captured a Bronze Medal in literacy, those schooled in the seventies got 5th place in the race. But those schooled in the nineties ranked 14th.

Have Americans sacrificed quality for equity? One could hope for such egalitarian bliss; unfortunately, the opposite is true. Among the twenty highest-income countries participating in the test, the United States wins the inequality Gold Medal.

Not true for the oldest group, however. For those educated in the fifties, the United States not only managed to achieve the second-highest literacy scores but, on the inequality index, scored no worse than average. Equity was not sacrificed for quality or vice versa.

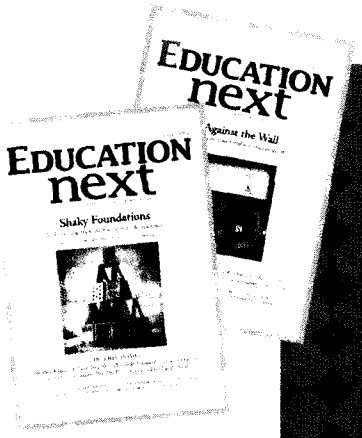
Apologists will find excuses for these outcomes; immigrants pull down U.S. scores, it will be said, overlooking the fact that other countries have immigrants too. Lifelong learning opportunities are greater in the United States than elsewhere, it will be claimed, so young folks will eventually reach the levels of the oldest group.

But such excuses don't ring true. **All signs point to a deterioration in the quality of American schools.** Europeans and Asians alike have rapidly expanded their educational systems over the last fifty years. In the United States stagnation if not decline has been apparent at least since the seventies. Even our high school graduation rates are lower today than they were a decade ago.

Do we care? Economists tell us that human capital is more important than physical capital for long-term economic development. Weak educational systems won't ruin the country overnight, but prolonged incompetence will eventually prove consequential.

— *Paul E. Peterson*

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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A world of ideas on public policy.

Direct-to-Consumer Pharmaceutical Ads Benefit Patients

by John E. Calfee

In 1997, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced a reinterpretation of its rules on direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising of prescription medicines. The effect of this reinterpretation was to modify guidelines for broadcast ads and therefore to increase the volume of DTC advertising several-fold. According to some critics, these advertisements deceive patients, promote overuse of medicine, and thus boost total health-care costs. A substantial body of research, consisting primarily of consumer surveys, allows us to evaluate these criticisms and draw preliminary conclusions about the effects of this advertising. This research supports the FDA's own assessment that DTC ads can provide substantial benefits to patients with little obvious cost.

The leading consumer surveys and other evidence suggest six tentative conclusions about the merits of DTC advertising. (I describe this evidence at length in a longer article cited at the end of this essay.) First, we can largely reject the suggestion made by critics that DTC advertising systematically deceives or misleads patients by, for instance, inappropriately downplaying risks and side-effects of drugs. The FDA tends to err overwhelmingly on the side of caution, frequently prohibiting even truthful and non-deceptive claims about drugs rather than risk allowing claims that might later prove to be misleading. The results of several consumer surveys strongly indicate that drug marketers are not suppressing or downplaying information about drug risks. It is very unlikely that widespread consumer deception has escaped detection by FDA regulators, who monitor ads closely and whose requests for changes are invariably acceded to by pharmaceutical companies.

Second, surveys provide direct and indirect evidence that DTC advertising provides valuable information to consumers, not just on obvious topics such as potential treatments or dosages, but also on risks and side effects. On the whole, DTC advertising appears to increase awareness of both the risks and benefits of drug therapy. This information is valuable for patients, in view of the proven difficulties of communicating risk information to them, as well as the fact that many consumers lack information about treatable medical conditions. The high levels of awareness of and attention to DTC ads also strongly suggest that consumers gain information about the core topics of these ads – symptoms of medical conditions, potential therapies, alternative dosages, and related topics – as a by-product of competitive advertising.

> ***Direct-to-consumer pharmaceutical ads can provide substantial benefits to patients with little obvious cost***

Third, DTC ads motivate consumers to seek additional information from many sources, but especially from physicians and pharmacists. Many of these consumers ask their doctors about specific medical conditions or illnesses for the first time. Given the overwhelming numbers of consumers who are aware of DTC ads, it is notable that between 14% and 27% of them (according to several recent surveys) said DTC ads caused them to ask their doctors about a condition they had not previously discussed.

A fourth finding is that DTC advertising causes almost no tension in the doctor's office, at least from the patient's perspective. Surveys show that very few respondents – usually under 5% – faced resentment or resistance from their docto when talking about what they had seen in dru advertising or in asking for specific medicine Overwhelming majorities said their physician treated their questions as an ordinary part office discussions.

Fifth, consumers like DTC advertising. Larg majorities (on the order of 60% to 80%) thin DTC ads give them useful information, empow them to make their own decisions about medicin and help them in talking to their doctors.

Sixth, DTC advertising appears to yiel significant indirect benefits for consumers. The benefits range from heightened awareness of th inherently risky nature of prescription drugs better compliance with drug therapies and eve motivation to pursue lifestyle and behavior change that may reduce the need for pharmaceuticals. I particular, ads remind consumers to take the medications and refill their prescriptions.

In conclusion, the results of recent survey strongly suggest that DTC advertising motivate consumers first to seek additional information especially from physicians, and particularly fo previously untreated or inadequately treate conditions – and then to work with their doctor to reach a decision about which, if any, prescrip tion drug to use. Congressional and stat legislators should keep these findings in mind a they consider proposed legislation that woul restrict the ability of pharmaceutical companie to advertise their medicines directly to patients.

John E. Calfee is a resident scholar at the America Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C. This article adapted from "Public Policy Issues in Direct-t Consumer Advertising of Prescription Drugs published in the* Journal of Public Policy and Marketin *(vol. 19, no. 2, Fall 2002). The full article can be foun at http://aei.brookings.org/admin/pdffiles/phpaQ.pdf.

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